REBELLION

MATEEL
HOWE
FARNHAM

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By

Mateel Howe Farnham

DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
NEW YORK - - - 1927

185808
1-9-27

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Quinn & Boden Company, Inc.
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
RAHWAY NEW JERSEY

DEDICATION

TO MY MOTHER, CLARA FRANK HOWE, WHOM I HAVE NEVER KNOWN TO DO A SELFISH OR AN UNKIND THING, THIS, MY FIRST BOOK, IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

REBELLION

CHAPTER I

MR. BURRELL'S family troubles with the younger generation began early.

Mr. and Mrs. John Taliaferro Burrell, junior, and their daughter Jacqueline lived in New Concord, Kansas, in a big white frame house with many gables and a tower, built in the middle eighties by Mr. Burrell, senior, a few years before he died. When her son married, old Mrs. Burrell went to live with her daughter Nancy, also widowed, and seldom came back to the home that had been hers except on the occasions when she was specially invited. Even then her daughter-in-law complained jealously that she believed Grandmother came to the house more to see old Simon than to see them. It was an added grievance that old Mrs. Burrell never sent for Simon to come to her but actually went instead to him in his stable. One of Jacqueline's first vivid memories of childhood, which she never outgrew, was of standing by the side door with her mother watching her grandmother's stately progress along the neatly swept gravel path that connected the house with the stable, her black silk skirts swishing majestically from side to side, the sun lighting up her silvery pompadour.

None of the grown ups could understand *why* Grandmother preferred the companionship of an old darkey to that of her own flesh and blood, even if he *had* been born a slave on her father's plantation. Jacqueline, however, understood perfectly. She herself considered

the stable the most fascinating place in the world and Simon and Daisy and Dick, the two fat carriage horses he took care of, the most beloved of companions. What Jacqueline resented was that her grandmother never invited her to accompany her on these visits to old Simon. Sometimes, when Jacqueline was in very special favor, she was allowed to go as far as the stable door, holding tightly to her grandmother's hand and walking as sedately as any grown person, keeping carefully out of the way of the swishing skirts and hardly daring to say a word, hoping against hope that *this* time she would be invited to stay instead of being told to run and play.

Once, indeed, Grandmother had kept Jacqueline with her for a minute or two while she showed Simon a funny little picture in a case that shut and locked and asked him whether he thought the child looked anything like she did when that was taken.

"Wellum, Mis' Laura, she do and she don't," answered Simon thoughtfully, scratching his head. "When it comes to looks she don't hold a candle to what you were, but sometimes it comes over me, that young as she are, she's got more er your sperrit than her pappy er all the rest of 'em put together."

"I hope not, Simon. I hope not," answered Grandmother thoughtfully and sighed. Then she kissed Jacqueline on the forehead—a rare caress—and told her to run and play. It may have been this day, it may have been another, that Jacqueline's curiosity got the better of her and she crept stealthily to a crack in the back stable door and listened to find out what weighty and secret matters her grandmother and Simon had to talk

over all by themselves. To her bitter disappointment they hardly said anything at all, but sat silently, contentedly, one occasionally asking a casual question and the other answering it briefly. It was years later after her grandmother's death that Simon, in an unguarded moment, explained to Jacqueline that "Mis' Laura" liked to come and "set" with him because he was the only one left who reminded her of the days before she had, in Simon's words, "laffed herself out."

Jacqueline was too young at the time to realize the significance of Simon's admission, but old enough to be impressed by its pitifulness. She never forgot it. Would the day come when she too would be laughed out? Were all old people that way? No, of course, they weren't, for Sarah Sawyer's grandmother was the merriest little old lady imaginable and old Mr. Bowen at the grocery store laughed at his own jokes (the same old jokes over and over) until Jacqueline often feared he would choke. Even Simon on occasions let out a cackle that was certainly meant for laughter. Yet Grandmother's own children admitted that they could never remember hearing their mother laugh—nor had they ever once seen her shed a tear, even when Grandfather died.

"Did she cry when her first little baby died?"

Well, of course her Aunt Sally Millard and her Aunt Nancy Crowell and her papa had not been born then and Simon professed not to remember. Jacqueline found herself hoping passionately that her grandmother had cried then—cried and cried. She felt, without understanding why, that she could not bear it if Grandmother had not cared enough then to cry.

This of course was later when Jacqueline was quite a big girl. While she was still little and a day or two after Grandmother had showed Simon the picture in the small black case she asked Simon what was meant by "sperrit" and Simon explained in some detail that a sperrit was a ghost. That left her more confused than ever but when she summoned her courage and asked her grandmother point blank whether she had ever seen a ghost Mrs. Burrell smiled and said, no, she never had.

"Simon sees them. They come and sit with him lots of times looking just as natural as they did in their coffins."

It was at a Sunday dinner table. Mr. Burrell ceased carving the roast beef and laid down his carving knife and fork.

"My *dear* Emily, may I suggest that you keep your daughter away from the stables a little more in the future?" (When speaking to his wife of Jacqueline, Mr. Burrell always referred to her as "your daughter" when she was in disfavor and "my daughter" on the rare occasions when she was not.)

"Why, John dear," fluttered little Mrs. Burrell, "I never knew you objected to her playing with Simon. He takes such good care of her. But I must speak to him. Of course you are right not to want her frightened by ghost stories."

"I ain't afraid of them," boasted Jacqueline.

"Am not, darling, not ain't."

"I am not afraid of them. Simon says dead folks can't hurt nobody."

"Anybody, dear."

"It hardly seems worth while correcting the child's grammar if she is to be encouraged to associate exclusively with darkies rather than her own—"

"Tut, tut, John," commanded his mother. "It was almost impossible to keep you away from Simon when you were Jacqueline's age. Sally and Nancy were quite as bad and until I was seven Simon was the only playmate I had. I can't see that he ever did us any harm."

"Well, perhaps not, perhaps not," subsided Mr. Burrell and changed the subject to Jacqueline's enormous relief. She had been fearfully afraid for a minute that her father would forbid her going near the stables and Jacqueline could not imagine a greater calamity. An only child living almost at the edge of town in a house surrounded by two acres of grounds, Simon and Daisy and Dick took the place in her life of brothers and sisters and playmates. From the time she could toddle she had liked nothing better than to steal away from her proper environment and spend as many hours as possible visiting Simon in his pungent domain. There were so many fascinating things in the stable—the haymow for instance, the surrey and Grandfather's old sleigh with the sleighbells, the mysterious dark bins full of oats and corn, the shoots from the upstairs where Simon shot down their feed right into Daisy and Dick's very stalls. And when she was tired of playing there was Simon to tell her stories of long, long-ago days when he was a boy on Great-grandfather Digges' plantation in Virginia where he and Grandmother were born the very same week and Simon's

mammy took care of them both and they played together until Simon was quite a big boy and refused to play longer with girls.

One of Simon's chief recommendations in Jacqueline's eyes was that he had not been a good little boy any more than she was a good little girl—unlike the other grown-ups with whom she was associated, who all seemingly had been perfect models of deportment from the day they were born. Simon, however, had been very bad and, in spite of frequent punishment, ran away every time he had the chance to the neighboring Burrell plantation where he sometimes stayed for days and days playing with Great-uncle Tom, who was his own age, and Grandfather, who was a good deal older, but still young enough to hunt and fish and swim and do all the multitude of enchanting things with which boys beguiled their days, but which were forbidden to girls because they had to grow up and become little ladies. Simon ran away so much and so often that finally Great-grandfather Digges in disgust staked him in a poker game and lost him to Great-grandfather Burrell, who gave him to Uncle Tom Burrell for his very own body servant. And that was how Simon happened to come first to Kansas with Uncle Tom, who wasn't very strong and couldn't go to school so was sent to Kansas with Grandfather when Simon and Uncle Tom were only sixteen, but Simon as fully grown as he ever was and already a great hand with horses.

Uncle Tom and Simon went back and forth to Virginia (going from New Concord to Saint Louis by steamboat and from there by boat and train) because they were so young they had to go back to see their mothers.

Grandfather, however, was a man grown and he stayed because he and his friends hoped in those early days before the war to make Kansas a slave state. After several years he went back and married Grandmother and when, only a little while later, the war broke out he could not go to fight until the second year because he had Grandmother and one little baby to take care of and another one on the way and he was just starting in business and far from being the rich man he became later.

Uncle Tom, however, being a bachelor, was off like a shot to enlist in the Virginia Volunteers and of course wherever Uncle Tom went there went Simon close at his heels. It was during the second battle of Bull Run that Uncle Tom had his leg shot off and naturally it was Simon who crawled out under heavy fire and brought him back to his own lines. He died afterwards in Simon's arms and Simon had to go home alone to break the news to his mother—carrying his sword and her tintype wrapped in a bloody handkerchief. This part was too sad to dwell on long so Simon would hurry over it and tell quickly how, when the war was over, Grandfather went back to Kansas and sent for Simon to come and work for him. Simon loved to describe in detail his long, long ride alone (there was no money then for railroad and steamboat fares) clear from the Potomac River to the Missouri on Peter, the bay stallion who had carried Uncle Tom in battle and who was the great-great-great-great-grandfather of Daisy and Dick who now stood contentedly swishing their tails and munching their corn but with their ears cocked and not losing a word of what Simon was telling, to catch him up if he made a mistake. (They

had heard the tales often and often before Jacqueline was born and since at least half the story was about their own great great great etc., grandfather it was natural that they should take pride in seeing that Simon told it correctly and left nothing out.) When he did forget (and this happened occasionally) one or the other of them would stamp a reminding foot and then Simon would stop, scratch his head and ask, "Whut's that, you-Dick? (or you-Daisy?) Oh-hh. I've left out the part erbout the rapscallions from New Orleans stealin' you' grandpappy and puttin' him on the boat and how he jumped overboard and swum himself ashore in the dark? All right, all righty. Keep yoreself quiet. I jest ain't got to it yit."

Naturally then, with such a history, Simon was nothing short of a hero in Jacqueline's eyes and much more than a servant to all the Burrells—was in fact as integral a part of the family as Jacqueline herself. Though he had grown old and fat, heavy and slow on his feet, and could no longer see very well he stubbornly persisted in his refusal to be pensioned or to surrender his beloved position as coachman. Nor would he tolerate a younger man as helper except in the yard. Simon, unfortunately, as he grew older, grew more and more dominating and more and more inclined to take advantage of the indulgence granted him. Mr. Burrell grumbled and complained and threatened a dozen times a day to get some one in Simon's place, but some way he never did. Simon could not see well enough to drive at night so when Mr. and Mrs. Burrell went out evenings they either hired a hack or walked. Simon could not drive in bad weather on ac-

count of his rheumatism, but every day, rain or shine, he managed to drag himself over from the little cottage on the back of the place, where he lived with his spry and active third wife, to care for Dick and Daisy. And on fine Sunday mornings Simon, with the aid of some specially constructed steps, mounted the box and drove Mr. and Mrs. Burrell to church. Occasionally, if the weather happened to be just right and he in good humor he permitted "Mis' Emily," as he called Mrs. Burrell, to go in her carriage on a round of calls, although he *had* been known to turn and drive home by himself when he decided she had lingered unduly in making a call.

Simon, however, was seldom cross with Jacqueline and if he was she did not mind. But it was Simon who was the cause of Jacqueline's being given the only spanking she ever had in her life and even this she forgave him. This happened when Jacqueline was four years old and already so famous for being spoiled and getting her own way that the spanking was considered of sufficient importance to warrant an item in the New Concord *Daily Globe*—to poor Mrs. Burrell's extreme mortification. Mrs. Burrell consented to the punishment after she was reluctantly convinced that it was the only way in which she could save her child's life. For Jacqueline had developed a playful fancy for crawling under Daisy and Dick and tickling their fat stomachs with a feather. Simon, who had snatched her from an avenging hoof not once but a dozen times, had warned her, coaxed, threatened, but all in vain; the minute his back was turned there she was at it again. He carried her finally, shrieking and protesting, "cussin'," Simon called it, to

her father and mother and insisted upon a whipping. Mrs. Burrell protested, but Mr. Burrell backed Simon up.

"It won't do no good onless you whale the tar outer her," Simon said darkly. "She's that contrary and that smart that she won't pay no attention at all onless you give her a real one whut she'll remember."

So Mrs. Burrell, sobbing as hard as Jacqueline, gave her a real one and Jacqueline remembered and never again tickled Daisy and Dick. But instead of holding a grudge against Simon, who first suggested the punishment, or against her father, who delivered the ultimatum which settled her doom, Miss Jacqueline showed the Machiavellian stuff of which she was made by withdrawing her favor from her mother for an endless week. She refused to kiss her, refused to return her smiles, climbed down from her lap when placed there, even pushed aside the proffered candy and a new doll. At the same time she redoubled her usual attentions to her father, ran to meet him, showered him with caresses, insisted that he hear her prayers and put her to bed. Poor Mrs. Burrell suffered as she never dreamed she could suffer during this terrible week and at its end was a crushed and broken woman. One evening after Jacqueline was in bed she went in and knelt down by the autocrat's bedside and unashamedly sued for forgiveness.

"You know, darling, Mamma only punished you for your own good," she pleaded. "If Dick or Daisy had given Mamma's darling one little kick with their big hoofs it would hurt a hundred times more than a little spanking —and Mamma could not bear it to have her little girl hurt that way. Why, she might have been hurt so badly

that God would have had to take her away to live with Him forever and ever."

Here Mrs. Burrell broke down and cried and the hard heart of her daughter melting suddenly she felt loving forgiving arms around her neck. They both cried, healing tears, and the incident was never mentioned further between them. So naturally Mr. Ed Howard was never again able to print in his old *Globe* that there was a rumor current (but unconfirmed) among the neighbors on North Second Street that Jacqueline Burrell had actually had a spanking for Jacqueline was never again so humiliated or demeaned.

"I hear you have been a very bad little girl," said Grandmother to Jacqueline next time they met. Jacqueline hung her head ashamed to answer. Her grandmother was the one person in the world of whom she stood most in awe.

"I wonder if you know where you get it from?" went on Grandmother, smiling a little. "Certainly not from your mother or father."

"Was Papa a good little boy?" asked Jacqueline, hoping against hope that he wasn't.

"All my children were good—like their father," answered Grandmother and sighed.

If Jacqueline had been a little older she might have wondered why a mother should sigh over her children's goodness, but as it was she only realized that she was in special favor with Grandmother who was always kind, but seldom accorded Jacqueline the attention and deference to which she was accustomed and accepted as a matter of course.

CHAPTER II

JACQUELINE was in her thirteenth year when she became definitely allied with the suffrage cause. She really was a feminist rather than a suffragist, but at twelve she did not know what a feminist was and was by way of becoming intimately acquainted with the activities of the suffragists. Her father called them suffragettes and denounced them passionately in her presence, in and out of season.

"They're the curse of this generation," cried Mr. Burrell one morning at breakfast. "Brazen, short haired, harsh voiced creatures who think it's smart to kick up a perpetual rumpus because the Creator did not see fit to make them men. For myself I think it is an insult to decent womanhood to pay any attention to those snarling, unsexed creatures, but they seem to have intimidated every body of nincompoops in this country that dares call itself a legislature. Rome was dominated by just such another lot of harridans two thousand years ago and any student of history will back me up in my assertion that the fall of Rome can be directly traced to giving women the vote. When I was a young man women respected themselves and were in consequence respected, revered, looked up to, as my mother was, but now . . ."

Jacqueline, who was finishing her oatmeal, had given her father's remarks unusual attention. Now she laid down her spoon.

"I'm one," she announced gravely.

"Tut, tut. Nonsense!" said Mr. Burrell somewhat testily with an accusing glance at his wife. She had the bringing up of their daughter and she knew how much he disliked being interrupted in this rude way just when he was in the midst of expounding some of his deepest and weightiest thoughts.

"Darling," murmured Mrs. Burrell, answering her lord's glance. "You must not interrupt your father when he is talking."

"Well, I thought he'd want to know," insisted Jacqueline, buttering her toast.

"You won't be a woman for a dozen years yet, thank God," snapped her father, "and I trust that by the time you DO grow up the gentle voices of the millions of worthy women like your mother and grandmother will have drowned out the strident shrieks of the few thousands of notoriety seekers who are making the very name of modern womanhood a stench in the nostrils of decent people."

"I don't know what you mean. I'm a suffragette," said Jacqueline.

"My dear child!" cried Mrs. Burrell. Mr. Burrell sat silent in a dangerous calm.

"But I am," persisted their daughter, "and if I am I have to say so, don't I? I'd be a coward if I believed in a cause and didn't say so, wouldn't I? Anyway, that's what Mr. Mize told us at Sunday School."

"Did he never tell you that little pitchers should be seen and not heard when their elders are talking?" asked Mrs. Burrell hurriedly.

"If I thought . . . if I imagined . . . that my daughter . . ." began Mr. Burrell.

"But, my dear, it's too silly to pay any attention to," soothed his wife. "She's only a little girl and she has overheard some one . . ."

"I didn't," cried Jacqueline passionately. "I made up my mind all by myself. I don't think it's fair that Wirt Sawyer can grow up and vote and I can't. He said he could when he was twenty-one but I couldn't never and I said I bet I could. I bet him a million dollars I could . . . and I bet I can too. And Wirt said he could be president and I couldn't and he could have me hanged or shot and I said . . ."

"Not so fast," smiled Mrs. Burrell. "You have just as many chances of being Mrs. President as Wirt has of being president. You might tell him that."

"It wouldn't be the same thing," said Jacqueline darkly. "Sarah said she'd rather be pope, but Wirt said he was a dago. Anyway I'd rather be president."

"And I suppose you will want to cut your hair off and wear trousers?" inquired Mr. Burrell witheringly.

"Mrs. Moore, the lady suffragette who made a speech at the opera house didn't wear trousers," explained Jacqueline painstakingly. "She was over to Mrs. Sawyer's for lunch day before yesterday and I saw her and she had on a green dress, the prettiest green dress you ever saw, and a green hat and a coat with a green lining. She didn't shriek either. She talked just as nice as anybody and said was I the little girl in the big white house and didn't I have nice hair."

"She certainly could not say that you had nice manners," rebuked Mr. Burrell coldly. "How a child of mine

brought up as you have been in a refined home with carefully selected playmates and in constant companionship with a gentlewoman like your mother can pick up such low vulgar ideas and language is, I confess, beyond my comprehension. I HAD thought that Will Sawyer had more sense than to let his wife go gallivanting around with a band of erotic, ill-balanced female lecturers from Topeka. If he hasn't I think that both you and your mother had better keep away from the Sawyers."

"Can't I play with Wirt and Sarah?"

Mr. Burrell fidgeted. He particularly disliked his daughter's direct methods of attack. Will Sawyer, the father of Wirt and Sarah, was one of his oldest boyhood friends as well as his closest neighbor and he certainly had no desire to start a neighborhood feud.

"If you forget this nonsense about wanting to vote and keep out of the way of strangers, you may continue to play with Wirt and Sarah as much as you please. I have requested you a hundred times if I have once, never to talk to strangers, but my wishes are evidently nothing to you and at the first opportunity you . . ."

"I didn't talk to her, Papa. She talked to me. I was waiting by the front door for Sarah to go to school and this lady came out on the porch and said was I the little girl from the big white house next door and didn't I have nice hair. I didn't say nothing."

"Anything, darling. But didn't you answer the lady or say, yes, you were the little girl from next door, or thank her for complimenting your hair?"

"No'm. I just nodded and then Sarah came out and we went to school."

Mrs. Burrell's unfortunate inquiry was the last straw

that broke the back of Mr. Burrell's already over-burdened temper.

"My *dear* Emily! *May* I ask whether my wishes are or are not of any importance in this family?"

"Why, John, what have I said? You know they are, dear, of the utmost importance, always."

"Then why do you select the very moment in which I have requested your daughter NOT to talk to strangers to administer a rebuke to her for not answering that notorious Moore woman who seems to have bewitched the entire neighborhood?"

"Why . . . oh, dear! I was pouring the coffee and I hardly noticed what you said to Jacqueline. Of course she must not talk to strangers, but Mrs. Moore was a guest of the Sawyers and it really seemed rude not to answer her."

"In other words, you would much prefer that Jacqueline should offend me, her father, than that termagant from Topeka who goes about neglecting her husband and children for no other reason in the world than to get into the spotlight! No wonder the child is becoming impossible and a perfect by-word for impudence and pertness."

Mr. Burrell pushed back his chair and rose, throwing his napkin into a crumpled heap on the floor. "As for you, Miss," he said, glaring at Jacqueline, "if I hear any more nonsense about suffragettes and voting and if you do not mend your manners and conduct yourself more like a gentlewoman you will find yourself packed off to a convent some fine morning before you know it."

Mrs. Burrell was crying softly into her handkerchief

and Mr. Burrell's anger at her died as suddenly as it was born.

"I beg your pardon, my dear," he said almost humbly, "but my gout kept me awake most of the night. I daresay you have done the best you can with such a headstrong opinionated member of the modern generation as your daughter."

"But she's such a child," sobbed Mrs. Burrell. "She doesn't even know what a vote is." The threat of a convent had quite unnerved her.

"Of course not. But she does know what I think of women who desire to vote, and for no reason in the world but to annoy me she defies me by flaunting in my face her intention of becoming the one thing I most dislike on earth."

Mr. Burrell gave a glance at his sullen mouthed daughter with her straight mass of dark brown hair, her defiant eyes (scratches on her arms, a broken finger nail, a sunburned nose) whose very being bristled with defiance and asserted her God-given prerogative of becoming a suffragette if she wanted to. He had named her Jacqueline not only because there had been for many generations in Virginia a Jacqueline Burrell, "the toast of the county," but because the very liquid sound of it connoted moonlight and the scent of jasmine, candlelight on polished mahogany, the songs of mocking-birds . . . and lovely timid ladies who walked in old-fashioned, mignonette-scented gardens, with blush roses in their hair, and shy sweet lips and shyer glances.

His thoughts went back this particular morning to the gentle little daughter he had dreamed of fondly at Jac-

queline's birth—to the little girl in the short high waisted frock who was to play contentedly with her dolls in her garden or trundle her hoop sedately along the smooth hollyhock-shaded paths—like the little lady she was. That little dream daughter would never have wanted to vote or interrupted and defied her elders. To the father who loved her she would have been always a comfort, a joy—restful, an inspiration. Mr. Burrell stalked with great dignity from the dining-room, Jacqueline's defiant eyes following his indignant back until the door slammed.

"Jacqueline darling, you must run and beg Papa's pardon before he leaves for the office. He was *so* hurt," pleaded Mrs. Burrell.

"But, Mamma, I didn't say a single thing to cause all that fuss. I just said I was a suffragette and I am and I'm always going to be and it was silly for Papa to act like that."

"But you interrupted him, dearest, and you know how that upsets him besides being the worst of bad manners."

"Well, he interrupts me and you too—lots and lots of times."

Mrs. Burrell began to cry again. "You know how Papa loves you," she said brokenly, "better than anything in the world. And you know how he dislikes those bold forward women who want the vote. I'm sure I don't want to vote. Surely a little girl like you ought to trust her own papa and mamma about what's wisest. It's a little silly, don't you think, for you to make poor Papa unhappy over something that cannot possibly matter to you for years and years? Won't you please go and tell him you are sorry for what you said and bring him back

to the table? He didn't finish his breakfast and he will be ill and unhappy all day. Mamma won't have a minute's peace until you have begged his pardon."

"But when I'm not sorry and say I am it's telling a lie, isn't it?"

"But you *are* sorry you made Papa and Mamma unhappy, aren't you, dear? Couldn't you tell him that?"

"But I *am* going to be a suffragette when I grow up, Mamma."

"But you won't be grown up for a long, long time. Don't you think you might put off deciding what you are going to be until the time comes?" coaxed Mrs. Burrell, stooping over Jacqueline and kissing gently a hot rebellious forehead. "Couldn't you do this for Mamma's sake? Mamma's head hurts her so and she just cannot bear it to have these quarrels and dissensions in her little family."

Jacqueline glanced once at the pale tired face so close to her own. Only too well she knew that if her father had been kept awake the night before by his gout her mother had been kept awake also. Suddenly she threw her arms about her mother's neck and hugged her impulsively. Then she walked straight to the library and knocked at its closed door.

"I'm sorry I interrupted you," she said shamefacedly to her father, "and I'm sorry I said I was a suffragette. I can't be one anyway until I am grown up and probably it will be better not to decide about it just yet."

So peace was restored in the Burrell family and Jacqueline was freely forgiven as she had been a hundred times before. "But I'm not sorry, really and truly and it wasn't fair, it wasn't," cried Jacqueline's outraged sense of justice.

CHAPTER III

MR. BURRELL'S own mother was authority for the statement that his wife Emily would have spoiled a saint and Mr. Burrell was far from being a saint. He was the only son in his family for one thing, several years younger than his sisters, and his father, who had been crazy for a boy, undoubtedly had over-indulged him. Moreover, it probably would have been better for him—better that is for the development of his character—if he had married in his twenties instead of his forties and chosen some one other than Miss Emily Phillips, daughter of Dr. Phillips, pastor of the New Concord Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Burrell married Miss Emily chiefly because of the pleasing fact that she admired him exceedingly and no woman in all his life, not even his mother—certainly not his mother—had ever before admired him as much as he secretly but passionately desired. Miss Emily, a gentle timid little person of the mouse-like variety, was used to a dominating father and to keeping herself in the background. She had never, until Mr. Burrell singled her out, had a real beau and she was so overcome by being chosen by a man of his importance and general desirability that she never got over it and was grateful to him for wanting to marry her till the day she died.

That this attitude on her part was none too good for her John goes without saying. Perhaps if the mother

whom he adored had not unconsciously (and in spite of an unfailing kindness and without either one ever realizing it) hurt terribly his subconscious self-respect by evading always, somehow, the affection he yearned to lavish upon her, he might not have found it so insidiously sweet to tyrannize over his wife.

Every one, however, found it easy to impose upon "Miss Emily" and Mr. Burrell was not the man to miss his cue as a lord of creation. Mrs. Burrell, indeed, actually went out of her way to make it easy for him to impose upon her. It was chiefly her fault therefore that her husband developed only too soon into a petty but, always it must be remarked, gentlemanly household tyrant. Mrs. Burrell, however, never minded this, never repented of her bargain, was instead both thrilled and pleased at her lord's masterful ways and thanked God every night for the wonderful husband He had given her. Mr. Burrell also was well satisfied with the situation, his wife and himself. It was Jacqueline, only, who objected.

Jacqueline, indeed, although adored, had always been a disturbing element. Her very coming had been a shock. "Miss Emily" was thirty-five at the time of her marriage and Mr. Burrell owned to forty. Somehow, it never had occurred to either one that they might by any mischance have parenthood forced upon them. When, during the fourth year of their marriage, it was driven in upon their reluctant consciousness that they were to have a child Mr. Burrell was not only shocked and dismayed but secretly a little ashamed. No one ever shrank more from unfavorable public opinion, from having his intimate

family affairs talked over and commented upon and perhaps joked about by curious outsiders than did Mr. John Taliaferro Burrell. That New Concord, both black and white, would not only comment but joke he knew only too well. Even in his own eyes it seemed unfitting, lacking somehow in delicacy, that persons of his and Mrs. Burrell's age and standing in the community should have a baby just like anybody else. It was of course right and proper for younger couples to have children (no one deplored more the dying out of the old American stock) but hardly to be expected of themselves.

Mr. Burrell was distinctly irritated and inclined to put the blame on Mrs. Burrell. Mrs. Burrell was meekly apologetic. She hardly knew *what* to think. Her method of meeting an unpleasant situation was first to deny tacitly to herself that it existed and, if that did not work, to pray over it. When both these methods failed she was helpless—as she was helpless now before Nature's law and her husband's displeasure. But once her child was born Mrs. Burrell loved her with a fierce intensity that Mr. Burrell secretly resented. He resented, too, not so secretly, that life was never the same in his family after Miss Jacqueline's arrival—he never again was so entirely comfortable and preëminent. Mrs. Burrell was never quite so well for one thing and this, until he got used to it, kept Mr. Burrell worried and disturbed and more than a little peevish. Jacqueline had colic constantly during the first year, cried a great deal at night. As she grew older she was continually annoying and disappointing him in more serious ways. She was a noisy, high spirited child, something of a tom-boy, and Mr.

Burrell could tolerate only quiet, lady-like little girls. His ideal of womanhood was his mother—his stately lady mother, who to the day of his death never called her husband anything less formal than "Mr. Burrell." Her remote unresponsive manner, which made other people feel there was something sad and lonely about old Mrs. Burrell, pleased her son as more lady-like and aristocratic than ever could any warm friendliness. After her death, when Jacqueline was twelve, Mr. Burrell cherished his ideals of her even more ardently than he had when she was alive.

In contrast to his mother and all she stood for in his eyes, Jacqueline's impetuousness, her unconcealed and often uncontrolled emotions, her storms and unreasoning laughter, made her seem at times almost an alien to her name and the traditions of her family. He never made proper allowance for Jacqueline's youth, always expected as much from her as if she had been a grown person and constantly criticized and complained of her in her presence. And yet he loved her in his own way as intensely as her mother did. Was she not bone of his bone, etc.? A Burrell? It was partly because he loved her so much, expected so much, that she kept constantly disappointing and annoying him. Jacqueline as a very little girl returned his affection ardently, had loved him as much or more than she did her mother, and just when she began to criticize and sit in judgment upon him it would be impossible to say. However, long before she was in her teens she had begun definitely to draw away from him and at twelve or thirteen had elected herself her mother's champion and defender. That poor Mrs. Bur-

rell did not want to be defended, desired, indeed, nothing so much on earth as not to be defended, mattered not a whit more to Jacqueline than other people's dissent over matters to any self-elected reformer. Nor did it ever occur to Jacqueline to ask herself whether her mother was in any way to blame for the state of affairs. All Jacqueline saw, all she understood, was that her father imposed shamefully upon her mother—upon her dear gentle fragile little mother, who had not the courage to stand up for herself.

That Mr. Burrell had remained the most attentive of husbands, that he seldom failed to compliment his wife's new gowns, that he nearly always remembered anniversaries and was fond of bringing home small gifts did little to soften his daughter's judgment of him. If, after Mrs. Burrell had been ill all day, Mr. Burrell kept her awake half the night reading to him because his gouty toe prevented him from sleeping, a rose at her breakfast plate, his plaintive thanks, a flattering comparison of her voice and diction with those of the modern generation only enraged Jacqueline instead of placating her. Jacqueline did not often dare voice her criticisms to her father, though occasionally she flared out at him, but all she was forced to bottle up in her father's presence she unloaded in good measure on her mother. The child seemed literally unable to allow poor Mrs. Burrell to enjoy her innocent pleasure in her flower or compliment and was certain to slay them with a bitter glance or sarcastic remark. Mrs. Burrell continued to thank God for the perfection of her husband, but she added nightly a fervent petition

that Jacqueline soon would come to understand and appreciate her father and give him a daughter's rightful affection. Mrs. Burrell, fortunately, was of a hopeful disposition and she always believed firmly that some day Jacqueline miraculously would change and her prayers be answered. Otherwise, the good little lady felt she never could have borne the discord between the two she so adored.

And then very quietly, when Jacqueline was a little over sixteen, Mrs. Burrell died of uremic poisoning. Jacqueline and Mr. Burrell were both utterly unprepared for it. Mrs. Burrell had been a semi-invalid for so long that they had both grown to accept her ill health as a matter of course and it had never occurred to either one that she was in any danger of dying or would not live as long as they did. One day Mrs. Burrell was about the house as usual, but in the late afternoon felt badly and sent for Doctor Robert Fox. Doctor Robert was in Saint Joe attending a dinner and was not expected home until midnight. About nine o'clock Mrs. Burrell, with her usual consideration, telephoned Doctor Robert's mother that they were not to tell him she had sent for him until next morning. Then Mrs. Burrell took some of her usual medicine and went to bed with a hot water bottle, promising to be up and about next day. It was about two o'clock in the morning that Jacqueline heard some one creeping softly up the polished hardwood stairs and called, "Mamma, is that you?"

"Yes, darling."

"But what are you doing up at this hour?"

"Oh, your papa could not sleep and I went down to make him an onion sandwich. Please don't scold, darling. Papa did not want me to go."

"Why didn't you ask me then?" asked Jacqueline coldly.

"But you were sound asleep and I was wide awake, anyway," explained Mrs. Burrell eagerly. She was by Jacqueline's bed now and as she leaned over to kiss her and seek forgiveness for "poor Papa" there was a strong odor of onions. It was years before Jacqueline could bear the smell of onions without a heart stab.

Doctor Robert arrived just as Jacqueline was ready for breakfast and as she went down the front stairs she could hear him scolding her mother affectionately for not letting him come in the night. Jacqueline was not at all worried—Doctor Robert came very often. She was half through her oatmeal when Doctor Robert called her. There was something in his voice that caused her heart to give a sudden dreadful leap and then she was up the stairs two at a time, her father at her heels. Her mother smiled at them, pressed Jacqueline's hand faintly, tried to speak and made a little choking noise and before Jacqueline knew what had happened Doctor Robert was leading her from the room and saying, "There, there," as if she were a baby.

The next two days remained ever after a faint blur in Jacqueline's memory. People came and talked to her —her aunts, various cousins, Sarah Sawyer and her mother, Doctor Robert, Mr. White, the Episcopalian clergyman—and though she must have heard what they said and answered them her mind never recorded a word. Her father she kept away from as much as possible

though she saw him as through a mist, looking at her wistfully when he thought she did not notice.

All that was left of the gentle kindly lady who had been known as Emily Burrell lay for two days on the big old-fashioned cherry bed in the front room where she had slept so many years. The door of that room was closed, the blinds lowered and the heat turned off. Jacqueline was never seen to open the door, lowered her eyes when she went by it. On the morning of the funeral her Aunt Sally came to her and told her how beautiful and young and peaceful her mother looked and asked her if she did not want to come and see her before . . . before . . .

Mrs. Millard could not finish her sentence and Jacqueline said coldly she did not care to. Mrs. Millard went away faintly shocked and tenderly aggrieved. She loved Jacqueline, suffered for her, yearned to be of comfort, but she feared that the child was not showing the proper feeling or respect for her mother. Conventions, forms, mattered terribly to the Burrells and they all felt that a daughter who did not go near a loved mother's remains, avoided a last tearful good-by, was in some way outraging the proprieties as well as the affections. Mrs. Millard did not know, of course, that Jacqueline had crept into her mother's room the night before after every one was in bed and stayed there all alone through the night, keeping her last vigil. It was torture, sheer and simple, for Jacqueline to open that door and go alone into that dark cool room where that beloved dreadful Something that had been and was and yet horribly was not her mother, lay for its last night on earth.

But the thought had come to Jacqueline that her

mother's timid spirit was perhaps in that room, shut in, alone, frightened and longing terribly, powerlessly for the ones she loved best to come to her. The thought of her mother alone, longing for her, frightened, was too much for Jacqueline. She was afraid with a fear that made her blood beat audibly in her ears and her heart contract until it was a physical pain and yet she hoped, she prayed, she pleaded in whispers for a sign from her mother, from God, from Anything, that would show that her mother was still living somewhere and still loved and needed her.

There was no sign and at dawn Jacqueline crept back to bed with all her world blasted to ruins. She was so tired she fell to sleep mercifully soon and was sleeping so peacefully at breakfast time that no one had the heart to waken her. When she opened her eyes at ten o'clock her Aunt Sally was standing by her bedside and asking her whether she did not want to go in and see her dear mother before . . . before . . .

A little later she heard the steps of men going carefully, one foot at a time down the front stairs as if they were carrying something heavy but infinitely precious that might break if it were dropped. Jacqueline cowered under the bedclothes until her aunt appeared again carrying a breakfast tray and tried to coax her to eat.

"I can't just now, Aunt Sally. But will you do something for me?"

"Of course, dear. Anything on earth that I can."

"Will you tell Papa that I'm . . . that I can't . . . come downstairs to-day?"

"But, Jacqueline, my dear, it's the afternoon of the

funeral. Your father will be dreadfully distressed. Why, people will think . . ."

"I don't care what they think. I'm not going downstairs."

"Are you ill?"

"No."

"But you are *surely* going to the cemetery? You are not going to let your dear mother be buried without you?"

"I'm not going," said Jacqueline sullenly . . . "I just . . . can't. And please try to keep Papa away. I've made up my mind and I can't bear any fuss."

Of course Mr. Burrell made a fuss, but Jacqueline lay on her bed with her face turned away from him and refused to answer a word. Others came and pleaded, argued, commanded, but all fruitlessly. They sent finally for Doctor Robert and he came in and shut the door and sat down by the bed. Jacqueline and Doctor Robert had always been great friends, but now she eyed him malevolently.

"I'm not sick," she defied him. "I don't see why you have come."

"Have you had your breakfast?"

"No, I don't want any."

"Good, I haven't had any either. I've been up all night with old Mrs. Babcock and my last meal was at two this morning. I'm going downstairs now and see what I can find. You better wash your face and comb your hair a little before I get back. You look a sight."

Doctor Robert was back almost before Jacqueline had her face washed and they two had breakfast together, quite a big breakfast, and Jacqueline, after saying she

could not eat a bite, ate all of her share. She even smiled once or twice, pale little ghosts of smiles, at some of Doctor Robert's sallies, but she was watching him suspiciously all the while.

"Doctor Robert," she said finally, "will you please go downstairs and tell them that I am too sick to be disturbed even though I am not?"

"Certainly. And if they don't believe me, I'll give you something to make you sick."

"You're not joking?"

"My dear child, do you think a little thing like a white lie would keep me from doing you a favor? Besides, you are sick, heartsick, mentally sick, and as your physician I am going to order you to stay in bed until you feel like getting up. And to-night, after dinner, I'm coming to give you something to make you sleep."

Tears came to Jacqueline's eyes and overflowed. "Doctor Robert, I'm not just being stubborn. But I can't go . . . out there. I can't bear to look at Mamma . . . shut up . . . put away . . . I just . . . can't . . ."

He longed desperately, as he had often longed in similar circumstances to say something reassuring, comforting about the hereafter and the certainty of finding her mother again, but Doctor Robert's youthful beliefs in immortality had been forever extinguished by his coldly analytical studies in German philosophy and he was too inherently honest to pretend to a faith he did not have.

So Emily Burrell was buried in the Burrell family lot on a cold winter's afternoon and one of the two she loved best on earth was not there to do her honor. There was no criticism because every one had heard that the poor

child was so prostrated with grief that Doctor Robert had ordered her to stay in bed, fearing a nervous collapse, and sent Miss Kays, the nurse, to stay with her. It was a huge funeral, for every one in town had known and loved "Miss Emily" and felt that with her going they in some way lost a little of themselves. Mr. Burrell was flattered, pleased at the crowds, the mountain of flowers, the quantity of letters and telegrams that poured in on him. He refused to send out engraved cards of thanks as his sisters suggested and, unaided, spent days in writing personal notes, painstakingly, carefully, taking great pride in his neat phrases and aptly chosen words.

And then suddenly his task was finished and he had nothing in the world to do—nothing to look forward to, no Emily to admire and console him, no one to turn to, no one to live for, work for . . . no one, that is, but his daughter Jacqueline. But Jacqueline in a black frock was somehow remote and strange. She had never loved him as a daughter should . . . never understood him. Though she was now perfectly well she stubbornly refused to go to the cemetery with him, was not interested in the stone he was choosing so carefully—it was to be one of the handsomest in Mount Vernon Cemetery—did not care at all whether he selected white roses or pink to carry to her mother's grave.

Day after day in the bitter cold he drove out alone in his Emily's phaëton to the cemetery bearing his offering —a little old man, forsaken and forlorn. Daytimes he kept up bravely enough—the Burrells were never ones to parade their emotions—but at night, alone in the darkness, without Emily . . .

CHAPTER IV

"BABY, you ain't treatin' yore pappy right," said Simon one snowy afternoon in January. Mr. Burrell had driven off not long before in his daily pilgrimage to the cemetery and Jacqueline, lonely and restless, had wandered out to the stable to chat with old Simon. The servants in the house were new and Jacqueline felt drawn to Simon partly because he was a part of her old happy life and partly because in his cross old way he had loved "Mis' Emily" even while he imposed upon her.

Jacqueline, huddling close to Simon's roaring cast-iron stove, opened the door and watched the red glow awhile before she answered.

"Did Papa tell you so?" she asked finally.

"Yore pappy ain't said a word, one way or another, but I got eyes in my haid same as you or ennybody. An' what I don't see yore ma tells me. Seems like I can't set down by myself ennymore ennywheres in peace and comfort without yore ma comin' and pesterin' me because I don't make you behave to yore pappy. I bin a-arguin' and a-arguin' with her and tellin' her ef she had taken my warnin' and whupt you more like I told her when you was little she would have saved herself and me a heap a-trouble now. But, shucks! I might-a knowed it t'weren't no use. There ain't no telling a woman ennything, livin' er daid."

"Simon, you don't mean that you can *see* Mamma? That she comes and stands right beside you?"

"That's what I said," answered Simon indifferently, "and she ain't the onliest one. Yore grandpappy most worriet the life outer me, comin' hantin' me day *and* night ontil I tuk his Prince Albert coat out to the cemetery and left it hangin' there on his tombstone. He had chose that there coat to be buried in but yore grandma had made up her mind that he were to be burried in his new dress suit and done accordin'. She was a great one for havin' her own way, yore grandma were, and yore grandpappy knowed better'n to go hantin' *her*. Ef I hadn't put my foot down just like that"—here Simon brought his foot to the ground with a resounding whack that made Jacqueline jump—"and told him that enuff was enuff, he shorely would-a had me diggin' him up and takin' off one coat and puttin' on the other. I'd-a done a lot for your grandpappy and well he knowed it, but as I had to tell him, being lady's maid for a corpse is outer my line and ef you wants yore clothes changed you can send for Mr. Harouff and git dug up properly. After I left the coat hangin' on the tombstone he seen it t'weren't no use and left me alone."

Jacqueline, during this recital, felt every individual hair rise on her head. She had to swallow hard before she could speak.

"Simon, does . . . Mamma . . . talk to you?"

"No, baby, 'tain't necessary. I can kinda sense whut she means to say. She jest stands and looks at me, now and again wringin' her hands when I gits the better of her in my argumint."

"But . . . does she look happy? *Is* she happy?"

"Ain't I jest told you she can't rest happy because you

ain't treatin' yore pappy right? I ain't noticed but otherwise she looks jest about the same. They most generally do. I ain't see yore grandpappy for quite a spell, but he used-a come wearin' his dress suit and lookin' as natural as he ever did. Ef yore grandma hadn't told him not to order hisself a new dress suit because he were over seventy years old and 'twouldn't be no good but to be burried in, he never would have carried on so. I remember, same as ef it 'twas yestiday, when that suit come home and yore grandma . . ."

Jacqueline tried to coax Simon back to talking about her mother, but he was absorbed in his reminiscences and could not be diverted.

"I don't believe a word of it," protested Jacqueline jealously, choking back her tears. "If Mamma was coming back to anybody she would come to me. I know she would."

"You ain't got the gift, honey. You ain't got the gift."

"I don't care. I don't believe it. You are drawing on your imagination. Papa says you have the liveliest imagination in New Concord County." (What Mr. Burrell really had said was that Simon was the greatest liar in the county.)

Simon, not sure whether to be flattered at this tribute to his powers or offended at Jacqueline's disbelief, took refuge in a sulky silence. Partly in atonement, partly out of curiosity, Jacqueline returned to the subject.

"Does Grandma ever come back, Simon?"

"No, baby. Yore grandma didn't rightly care enough

fer things er this world to come back. She were the only person I ever knowed who were glad when her time come to go."

"Simon, I used to feel that too—even when I was a little girl. She was so sort of . . . detached, if you know what I mean."

"Yes, honey, I know."

"And yet she wasn't very religious. I can barely remember Grandpa. Was she that way before Grandpa died? I mean was it losing him made her lose her interest in living?"

Simon gave a short laugh. "No'm, I shouldn't rightly say yore grandpappy had much er ennything to do with it."

"Simon, you knew Grandma when she was a girl. Was she always like that? Indifferent, I mean? Most people were afraid of her, I think. Papa and Aunt Sally and Aunt Nancy weren't exactly *afraid,* but I don't think they ever dared disobey her in their lives. And yet I don't think I ever heard her raise her voice or say a disagreeable thing. She was awfully good to Mamma, she was good to all of us, but some way I used to feel she didn't care very much for any of us—not *really* care, I mean, like most women do for their children and grandchildren. Of course, I was only twelve when she died so I did not think much about it, but looking back it seems to me that sometimes she was unhappy because she couldn't care more for us."

"Maybe she were. Maybe she were," said Simon darkly. His manner implied that he could say a good

deal more if he wanted, but that wild horses could not drag it out of him.

"But, Simon, what *was* she like as a girl? She was beautiful, wasn't she?"

"That's what they all said. Leastwise all the young men come hangin' round her thick as flies round a honey pot. She could-a had her pick er all the young men in Virginey. She was a high sperrited young lady—jest like a colt that never knowed a bridle. And laff! She laffed enuff in those days fer five er a dozen young ladies."

"But what happened to change her, Simon?"

"How should I know? Wasn't I off here in Kansas with yore grandpappy and Uncle Tom most all the time after she begun to grow up?"

"Well, you belonged to her father when you were a little boy, didn't you? And your mother was her mammy, wasn't she? Wouldn't your mother have known and told you?"

"My mammy never told me nothin'."

"But why did she marry Grandpa, who was so much older, if she could have had her pick of all the young men in Virginia? It wasn't money, I know, because he hadn't much then and her family had lots before the war."

"Mebbe she wanted a change. Mebbe she thought a change of scenery would do her good."

"Grandpa was a good deal like Papa, wasn't he?"

"My mammy used to say they were cut off the same piece."

"Well, I can't understand why she married him or why any one would have wanted to leave Virginia in the old

days and come to Kansas to live. Of course, if she loved Grandpa hard enough . . . did she *really* love him when she married him, Simon?"

"She never told me and I never thought it fitten to ask her. In those days us young folks, black and white, had been learnt our manners and was whupt ontil we couldn't sit down if we went pryin' into things whut weren't no concern er ourn."

"Well, did she and Grandpa seem happy together? You said just now you had eyes in your head. Couldn't you tell whether they got along?"

"I reckon they got along well as most folks. He most generally went his way and she went her'n. Ef they both wanted the same and wanted it different yore grandma most always got it but without quarrelin' for it. I can't hardly remember them quarrelin' over anythin' 'ceptin' that there dress coat."

Jacqueline tried a little longer to coax Simon to tell her more about her grandmother, but Simon was seldom known to do what he did not want to do and he had never proved communicative about old Mrs. Burrell. Jacqueline went back to the house finally and had a good cry all by herself. She had tried to talk about her grandmother more to keep her mind off her mother than anything else. It was six weeks now since her mother's death and she kept missing her more every day, wanting her, wanting her. She did not believe any girl in the world ever wanted her mother so. Of course, she did not believe Simon's story that Mamma came and stood beside him wringing her hands because she and Papa were farther apart than they had ever been. And yet it was

exactly like what Mamma *would* have done if she could come back and Simon really had the gift of second sight as he had always claimed he had and seemed honestly to believe.

All these weeks Jacqueline had hardened her heart against her father. Every thoughtless act, every lack of consideration for her mother, every remembered selfishness—including particularly that last onion sandwich—was marked in black letters against him. Gradually, however, and in spite of herself, Jacqueline felt herself softening toward him. He was very unhappy for one thing. He had lost flesh and with it much of his pompousness. His eyes had that bright strained look of one who is trying hard to keep back tears. He talked little—he who had so loved the sound of his own voice—and when he smiled it was saddest of all. But what made the strongest appeal to Jacqueline was the knowledge that he and she were the only ones who were really suffering because of her mother's death—were the only ones who really cared enough to be more than just "sorry." Plenty of people had loved her mother—in their way. Plenty of people would have given of their hearts, their strength, their money, to keep her alive. But only to herself and her father had she mattered more than anything on earth.

That evening after dinner Jacqueline waited a little and then, a book in her hand, tapped timidly at the closed library door. "Come in," said her father huskily. He was sitting close by the grate, doing nothing at all apparently but gaze at the glowing coals.

"I . . . I thought I'd come and sit with you awhile," volunteered Jacqueline shyly.

"Do, my dear, do," said Mr. Burrell, and rose and placed a chair for her, switching on the lights.

"I see you have brought your book," said her father rather formally making conversation. "I am glad you are fond of reading. You will find as you grow older that nothing will ever take the place in your life that books do. They are the one pleasure that never fails. But someway . . . these days . . . my eyes. I find it difficult to read."

"Are your glasses all right?"

"Oh, yes. They seem to be all right. You remember, perhaps, I had new ones only a few months ago."

"Would you like me to read to you? I don't read as well as . . . I don't read so very well . . . but I should be glad to."

"Thank you, my dear. Thank you. What is it you are reading now?"

"Oh, it's an old book, 'Little Women.' I read it over again ever so often."

She could not say that she had selected it because her mother had read it to her years before when she had to stay in bed with the chicken pox, but to her surprise her father seemed to understand. He took the bulky brown book from Jacqueline and as his hand touched hers he gave it a shy little squeeze.

"I remember," he said hastily, "that when I was ten years old your Aunt Nancy presented me with a copy of 'Little Women.' "

"What a silly book to give a boy!"

"It may sound so, it may sound so. But on the same occasion I presented her with a Rollo book I particularly wanted to own and the day after Christmas we traded. I sometimes think those presents your Aunt Nancy and I gave each other were the most satisfactory Christmas gifts I ever knew about.—I might almost say the only thoroughly satisfactory Christmas gifts in my experience."

Jacqueline smiled faintly. "That was a good system. You and I might try it out next Christmas. But what shall I read you this evening?"

"Well . . . I. How about 'The Three Musketeers'?"

The following afternoon Jacqueline wandered out to the stable carrying Simon a carefully pared and quartered apple.

"Well," said Simon, as he accepted the offering and began cautiously on the apple—cautiously on account of his false teeth—"Well, baby, yore mamma come to see me last night jest as I was drappin' off looking so happy I knowed in a minute you had made it up with yore pappy. She was so happy she almost seemed to shine."

"Papa told you?"

"Pooh. Yore pappy ain't tole me nothin'," said Simon scornfully—and changed the subject.

Jacqueline told herself that of course she did not believe it—that Simon *must* have been lying. But she was happier than she had been in weeks.

CHAPTER V

THE new found harmony between Jacqueline and her father lasted a little over a month. It possibly might have lasted a trifle longer if Jacqueline, feeling herself now practically grown up, the head of a household, a Junior in high school and a woman of property, had not suddenly decided it was intolerable that she must go to her father for every cent she spent. Her mother, out of her own little patrimony, had always provided Jacqueline with an abundance of pocket money, but Jacqueline now found this supply cut off and her father inquiring fussily what she wanted to do with this two dollars, how she spent the last he had given her. To a woman of spirit, a feminist born, such a situation was, of course, not to be borne, especially when the money she asked for was her own. Hadn't Mamma left her thirty thousand dollars? Hadn't she herself heard the will read?

"I, Emily Phillips Burrell, being of sound mind and in possession of all my faculties, do hereby give, devise and bequeath to John Taliaferro Burrell, the trustee hereinafter named, all my personal possessions and the sum of thirty thousand dollars, in trust, however, for my beloved daughter Jacqueline Burrell." The will went on to state that Mrs. Burrell put all matters of investment, expenditure and the settlement of her estate completely in her husband's hands until Jacqueline was thirty, when he must turn it over to her; and he could do so earlier in case she

married under that age with his full approval and consent. In fact, as might have been expected, Mr. Burrell had drawn his wife's will in his own spirit of law and justice.

Jacqueline did not even listen to much of the involved legal terminology of the will and about all she understood was that her mother had left her money to her—"to my beloved daughter Jacqueline." Her mother had loved her so much she had left her everything she owned. Jacqueline felt she ought to be as grateful to her father as to her mother for she knew only too well that her mother would never have made the will that way if he had not been perfectly willing. Thirty thousand dollars invested at six per cent brought in an income of eighteen hundred dollars a year or one hundred and fifty dollars a month. Why, that was five dollars a day—an enormous sum to a girl who had never had more than a few dollars at a time but all her wants supplied almost before she had them. She did not see how she could possibly spend one hundred and fifty dollars a month, but she felt it was high time she had a decent allowance and some of her own money to use as she wished.

"There is no need," said her father, when she politely had voiced this reasonable desire to him, "there is no need for you to draw on your patrimony for any of your usual expenditures. I am not only abundantly able but very happy to provide for your future needs as I have in the past. I hope when the time comes for me to turn your inheritance over to you you will find it considerably augmented from its present assessed value. Indeed, your grandfather Phillips left but a trifle over twenty-two thou-

sand dollars and the estate has already increased a third under my management."

"Yes, but you paid Mamma her interest all the time?"

"Yes . . . to be sure."

"Well, wouldn't it keep on increasing even if you paid me the interest?"

Mr. Burrell was considerably annoyed to be met with argument where he had hoped for gratitude, but he determined to be calm and reasonable.

"Not half so fast as if I invested the income instead of letting you spend it foolishly."

"But I don't want to spend it foolishly, Papa. I don't even want the whole hundred and fifty dollars a month. But I do want a reasonable allowance for spending money and my clothes and things like that."

"Haven't I just told you that I shall provide for all your reasonable wants? Have you ever found me ungenerous?"

"No-o. But it isn't a question of generosity, Papa."

"I cannot see . . . just what are you in particular need of now?"

"Nothing. It isn't a question of needs either. It's a question of whether it isn't just and fair to give me an allowance . . . out of my own money."

"Where you pick up your ridiculous notions I cannot imagine. I should think I might be trusted to decide what is right and fair for you. You are too young, entirely too young, to be trusted with the supervision of your expenditures."

"But, Papa, I am almost seventeen and in a little over a year I'll be of age. How am I *ever* going to learn to

spend my income wisely if you decide everything for me and what I must spend and what I mustn't. Can't you see? It's perfectly obvious!"

"You have a way, Jacqueline, of raising your voice in an argument that I particularly dislike. I was brought up to admire above all else low modulated voices in women. I can remember your Aunt Sally being sent to bed supperless when she was older than you are now because she forgot herself and used a shrill disrespectful tone much like yours to me when addressing my father. I cannot ever remember hearing your grandmother raise her voice. No truly well bred gentlewoman does."

"I'll try to remember to keep mine down and I did not mean to be disrespectful, but we were discussing my allowance."

"If your dear mother had thought it wise for you to have an allowance, doubtless she would have instructed me to give you one. As she did not, I shall continue to give you what seems right and reasonable at the proper times."

Jacqueline had realized while listening to the reading of her mother's will that her father had control of the principal of her estate until she reached the age of thirty, but never in her youthful ignorance had it occurred to her that he could also control her income after she came of age. She wanted now to make it clear to him that she had no intention of surrendering to him any of her just prerogatives. So she said politely but firmly, "When I am eighteen, of course, you will *have* to give it to me and I cannot see why not now. After all, it *is* my own money from my own Grandfather Phillips."

Mr. Burrell was more than annoyed—he was hurt—by Jacqueline's continual harping on the money being her own. Mr. Burrell was neither greedy nor ungenerous, but like so many of his sex he accepted as God-given the authority and prestige the purse holder enjoys over those dependent upon him. Mrs. Burrell had never spoken of her money as hers—always as ours—and Mr. Burrell had so long had the full control of it he unconsciously had come to think of it as his own.

"Both your tone and your words are disrespectful, if not insulting," he said to Jacqueline in the tone of one thoroughly ill used and deeply misunderstood. "If you will re-read your mother's will, a copy of which is in the drawer of the library table, you will find out that I do not *have* to give you anything until you are thirty years old —or married with my full consent and approval. Your dear mother trusted me, even if you do not, to do what was best for you."

"You mean you don't *have* to pay me my income when I come of age?" demanded Jacqueline aghast, so sure had she been that the hundred and fifty dollars a month were safely hers once she was eighteen.

"Not one penny of either income or principal before you are thirty unless you convince me of some good reason for turning it over to you earlier. And I may as well state now as later that if you do not make an effort to acquire more poise and self-control, if you do not learn to master your ill temper and subdue your distressing tendency to be insulting and disrespectful every time I do not see fit to accede to all your wishes, I shall for your own sake keep the money until the last possible moment."

"You will, anyway," said Jacqueline fiercely. She had not realized until this moment how much she had counted on being independent of her father in the not far distant future. With a new wrong, of course, all her old grievances against him came swarming back. She remembered that last tragic onion sandwich—how he had let her darling mother get up out of her death bed and go downstairs and make him an onion sandwich; she thought of the thousand and one petty selfishnesses and tyrannies against which she had been rebelling for years, and began trembling so she could hardly speak.

"How dare you speak to me like that?" she heard her father indignantly protest.

"How dare I? How dare I?" she cried and faced him, eyes blazing and hands clenched. What she might have said to him she hardly knew herself, but she remembered quite suddenly what Simon had told her of her mother's spirit being unable to rest because the two she loved best could not live together peacefully and affectionately. It seemed to Jacqueline, in her highly emotional state, that her mother had come to her now instead of to Simon —was standing there just behind her wringing her hands . . . as Simon had said . . . trying to tell her she must never, never say those cruel unnatural things that trembled on the tip of her tongue. Swiftly, as if she had been struck, Jacqueline whirled and faced the emptiness behind her. There was only a chair . . . a little table covered with books . . . The look on her face was so wild, so grief stricken, she turned so white that her father started toward her. But she brushed him aside and fled to the sanctuary of her own room.

Never, even in the days immediately following her mother's death, had she felt such heartache or such desolation. Her mother had gone and left her, after making a hideous unjust will that left her completely dependent on the father who had always misunderstood and disliked her. That he would never surrender any advantage he had over her Jacqueline saw clearly—and his control of the money gave him an enormous advantage.

"It isn't fair! Mamma did not realize. What right has he got to it anyway? My mother's father's savings!!" Her thirtieth birthday seemed as far distant as her hundredth—almost as many years away as she had already lived.

Jacqueline was never one to give up easily and accept defeat lying down, and as she stormed up and down her room she kept asking herself what she could do about it all. There was nothing she could do for the present, her common sense told her, but grit her teeth and bear it. When she was older she would leave home, run away if necessary, work her fingers to the bone before she would grow old and faded and browbeaten, waiting for her money —afraid to call her soul her own as Mamma had been. Of course, she might marry—naturally she would marry long before she was thirty and an old, old maid, but Papa had been mean enough to fix it so that he would not have to give her her money even then unless he wanted to. Trust him to find some excuse for holding back his "full approval and consent." Probably he would want her to marry some old stick like that slimy Sam Herrick who, as every one but Papa knew, had tried to marry every rich girl in town. Papa wouldn't believe it because Sam

flattered him as he flattered everybody who had money. But let Papa try to force Sam down her throat! Let him just try to decide whom she should marry and whom she shouldn't! She'd show him a thing or two, money or no money! But in the meantime . . . in the meantime . . . she wanted her mother. It always came back to the same thing. She wanted her mother and her mother was lying out in Mount Vernon Cemetery. Her darling, darling patient little mother. She couldn't bear the pain of it. She wanted to die too. She did not see why God let her go on living when she was suffering so.

Because it was impossible to cherish any resentment against her mother for the way in which she had left her money tied up in trust, Jacqueline cherished twice as much against her father. She never did become reconciled to the terms of the will. Mr. Burrell also felt himself abused and misunderstood. They were both miserably unhappy, barely speaking for days, and farther apart than they had ever been.

CHAPTER VI

JACQUELINE, still a junior in high school, had been chosen to make the farewell speech for the juniors to the seniors at the latter's graduating exercises and Mr. Burrell agreed that Jacqueline should have a new dress for the occasion. He did not agree, however, that Jacqueline was competent to select her dress herself and his Cousin Julia Markam was called in in consultation. Cousin Julia was generally considered the best dressed woman in town and Mrs. Burrell had often said in his presence that there was no one in whose taste she had so much confidence as Julia's.

Mrs. Markam vetoed promptly Jacqueline's choice of a dashing white taffeta she had seen in *Vogue,* in which the Countess de Pernac "had created a furore at the races at Longchamp" and selected instead in Kansas City a white organdie, made with many fine hand run tucks, lace insertions, ruffles and a frilled girlish sash. When the dress came home Jacqueline was so furious she was tempted to throw it, box and all, out of her window.

"But, Cousin Julia," she protested, "don't you think that looks just a little too youthful for a girl my age?"

"I chose it because it was youthful, Jacqueline. It's a charming little dress—all handmade."

"Yes, but, Cousin Julia, you don't seem to realize that I have to get up on the platform and make a *speech!*"

"Well?"

"But don't you *see?* The seniors have been terribly patronizing and superior all this year, acting as if we were mere kids and they the wisest things in the world, and naturally now that we are practically seniors the members of my class expect me to represent them fittingly—with dignity, I mean. (What she really meant was that she had boasted about the dashing white taffeta.) Why, I'd die of shame if I had to get up before everybody dressed in that babyish little thing. It's pretty enough, but it's not my type. Sarah Sawyer could wear it and get away with it. Maybe her mother would buy it for her. But it would make me look ridiculous."

"Just what is your type, Jacqueline?" asked Cousin Julia, smiling a little.

"I'm the sports type. I need simple things, cut just a bit daringly to make them individual. But NOT ruffles! Ever."

"Let's try on the organdie and see how you look."

With a long suffering sigh, Jacqueline complied. Cousin Julia tied the sash, adjusted it here and there, gave it a pat or two and turned the girl to face the mirror. Jacqueline saw mirrored before her a scowling faced girl of medium height, still undeveloped, still far too thin and angular, but with a great braid of unruly dark hair, long lashed, striking gray eyes, a fine white skin.

"I never thought you were pretty, Jacqueline, but I shouldn't be surprised if you would turn out to be more than pretty in a few years when you get your bones a little better covered. You carry yourself well and you have a dash—a style. But you're too young yet to wear daring things, and ruffles hide the bones."

"Papa will like it," said Jacqueline bitterly.

"Let's go and see."

"What's the use? I know what he will say, 'Delightfully girlish. Delightfully girlish.' If he had *his* way he'd dress me in swaddling clothes."

"I think your mother would like it too, dear."

Jacqueline tore off the offending costume, her eyes filled with angry tears. She wasn't going to discuss her mother with Cousin Julia any more than she was going to cry before her. What did Cousin Julia know about what Mamma would like, anyway? She guessed *she* knew what Mamma liked and didn't like better than any one else in the world. Mamma would never have wanted her to wear a thing that made her look like something on the Christmas calendar Mr. Baird sent out every year when he sent the Christmas turkey. Mamma at least had a few bowels of human compassion (Jacqueline had just come across the phrase in her reading and promptly annexed it). Mamma's hand at least had never been against her as all the rest of the family seemed to be.

Torn with rebellious self-pity Jacqueline got hastily into a dark blue linen Peter Thompson suit—another of Cousin Julia's hated selections—and by a great effort of will managed to choke back her tears. Then a great thought came to her.

"Cousin Julia," she said, "I'll wear the organdie dress and anything else you pick out if you'll get Papa to let me cut my hair off."

"But, my dear . . . your lovely hair! Why, it's your chief beauty."

" I don't care, it's a terrible nuisance. And every débutante in *Vogue* has her hair bobbed."

"You're still a school girl and I don't think the better

class of girls are bobbing their hair. Those that give their pictures to popular magazines are hardly those I should want you to copy. Anyway, I don't think your father would ever consent. He takes such pride in old fashions, old customs. He's conservative like all the Burrells."

She might have known it wouldn't be any use, thought Jacqueline bitterly, and got away from Cousin Julia as soon as she could on a pretext of studying her lessons. Once free, she fled as quickly as possible to the stables. Simon remained her one refuge. Simon in spite of his scoldings was always on her side.

"Well, honey, it never does no good to go kickin' too hard against the pricks," he consoled her. "Yore day's a-comin' and comin' fast. Nobody can't stop old Mister Time and first thing you knows you'll be growed up and wearin' enny old dress you please."

"That's easy to say, but that doesn't change the fact that I've got to get up before two or three hundred people next Friday night and make an exhibition of myself."

"Ain't you got anuther dress you kin wear?"

"Not a thing. All my last summer's dresses are too short. And you know I haven't had a new party dress . . . I haven't been to a party . . . this year."

"A-corse not, honey. A-corse not. How much does a new dress like whut you want cost?"

"Oh . . . I don't know. Miss Stindle would make it for me for about fifteen dollars, I suppose, and the silk would cost another fifteen or twenty."

Simon reached down in his back pocket and unearthed with some difficulty a roll of very soiled and worn

dollar bills. "I reckon I could spare you the money," he grunted.

"Oh, Simon, I couldn't *borrow* from you."

"Who else is there to borrer from? 'Pears to me you ain't got much choist."

"But I don't know when I could ever pay you back. Papa never gives me but a few dollars at a time and he has to know what I am going to do with every cent of it."

"Ain't you got no money put away?"

"Oh, I've got twelve dollars left of my birthday money. But that's all."

"It seems to me a smart girl like you might figger out a way to git a new dress for twelve dollars. I recollect onct when yore Great-grandma and Grandpa Digges were givin' a party. They tole yore grandma she couldn't come because she were too young and yore grandma were awful mad because both her sisters were goin'. So she up and made herself a dress to wear outer an ole one she found in the attic and went to the party ennyway."

"But wasn't she found out? Didn't they send her to bed?"

"Lordy, yes, but she were a smart one, yore grandma, and managed to keep outer sight ontil late in the evenin'. She didn't git sent to bed ontil nigh on to one o'clock."

"How old was she? Did she get punished afterwards?"

"Oh, fifteen or thereabouts, I reckon. There was some talk of whippin' her, but her pappy decided she were too big fer that and they locked her up on bread and water for a week. But shucks, she didn't mind. My mammy saw to it she had plenty else. She'd bin to the party and that's whut she cared about."

"Papa wouldn't know what dress I wore unless Cousin Julia told him. Anyway, he wouldn't lock me up on bread and water—he'd just fuss. That wouldn't hurt much—he's always fussing at me no matter what I do. It's the way he takes his exercise."

A little later Jacqueline climbed the attic stairs and stood thoughtfully regarding several trunks pushed back under the dusty eaves in the trunk room in the attic. Her mother's trunks were there but she could not bear to open them. The contents of most of the others she knew—there was nothing in them she could use—but she did remember an old, old trunk her grandmother had brought from Virginia, containing some dresses she had sometimes dressed up in as a child. Yes, here it was, a funny brass bound little chest with a rounded top and the lock fairly hanging off. It was no trouble to break it open.

The trunk contained some of the things her grandmother had discarded when she went to live with Aunt Nancy and some of the things, like her lace shawl, that had been divided after her death. Her Bible took up most of the smaller section of the top tray. There were some of her gloves, a box containing three duchess lace handkerchiefs, another shawl, a Paisley, a high carved comb, an old-fashioned beaded bag. Underneath there were dresses, one of dark red brocade—beautiful heavy stuff that could stand alone—one of black-ribbed grosgrain, one of gray cashmere, all smelling mustily of lavender and camphor balls. At the very bottom was a little cape made of mustard colored silk and black lace. That was all. There was nothing whatever Jacqueline could use.

She put them all back, folding them carefully. The sight of these things her grandmother had once worn and used saddened and depressed her. The thought of her beloved mother's things, her best things carefully put away by Aunt Sally and Aunt Nancy, in the trunks behind her, weighed on her heart like lead. Her own affairs did not seem of so much importance now as they had. What did it matter anyway what dress she wore? The organdie would do as well as any other. A wave of familiar longing for her mother engulfed her and she cried bitterly, sitting on the floor with her head in the musty trunk. It was almost dark before she decided she must dry her eyes and go down to dinner. There was a little pocket with a red strap on the underside of the trunk lid and almost without thinking what she did, Jacqueline put her hand in to see what it held. It was quite empty, but Jacqueline's exploring fingers encountered unexpectedly a rough spot at the bottom and gave it an inquiring poke. To her surprise the cloth gave way and she felt something underneath. It was a letter, faded and stained and written in almost illegible ink. Jacqueline carried it to the window so that she could read it better. It had no envelope or address and began simply, "My darling, darling girl."

"I am sending this by Simon [Jacqueline made out] and will be at our usual place by nine to-morrow evening. If you cannot get away, you can picture me there beneath our tree, longing for you, loving you as I sometimes think few men have ever loved a woman before. Oh, my Laura, my beloved, my bride! I cannot stand this situation much longer. It is killing me. Come to-morrow if you can. I shall wait until midnight. Martin."

Martin . . . who was Martin? Grandfather's name was John Taliaferro Burrell just like her father's. But perhaps Martin was a nickname. If it wasn't, Grandmother had certainly had a love affair with some one else besides Grandfather. It looked that way—meeting secretly at night beneath a tree with Simon carrying letters back and forth. How romantic it all was! But how sad! Perhaps Martin had been killed in the war. No, Grandmother had been married before the war. Perhaps Martin had been poor and her parents married her off to Grandfather because he was a Burrell and rich. Only he hadn't been rich at the time and Simon had told her more than once that Great-grandmother and Grandfather Digges had opposed their daughter's marrying and going to far off Kansas. So perhaps Martin had been only a passing fancy and she had loved Grandfather after all. Jacqueline herself had long ago resolved that she would not jump down the throat of the first man who asked her to marry him. But what did this Martin mean by calling Grandmother his bride? She read it over again. "Oh, my Laura, my beloved, my bride!" Oh, well, probably only a pretty figure of speech. The whole letter was rather flowery.

She slipped it back to its hiding place beneath the little pocket, resolved to say nothing about it. Perhaps she should not have read the letter. Perhaps it hadn't been quite honorable to read it. Certainly she would never have read one of Grandmother's letters if she had been living. Well, it was too late now and anyway she would not give Grandmother away, but she would find out if she could who Martin was. Was it because of Martin

that Grandmother had become a sad, sad old lady who never laughed or cried? Jacqueline was thrilled with a delightful sense of mystery as she descended the stairs.

"Papa, what did Grandmother call Grandfather?" she asked at the dinner table.

"Your grandmother was a very formal person, as you may remember, and usually addressed my father as 'Mr. Burrell.' He was a good many years her senior and I suppose she got in the habit of it and never changed. But why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing. I hardly remember Grandfather and I was wondering what he was like—whether he was the sort who would have nicknames."

"Your grandfather was a gentleman of the old school and did not encourage others to take liberties with him. In his earlier days he may have been called Jack, but I doubt it. In those old days they addressed children by the names which their parents bestowed upon them. I wish I could say the same of to-day."

"You went back to Virginia once or twice as a boy, didn't you? Do you remember meeting anybody back there named Martin—any of the old neighbors, I mean?"

"No . . . I don't remember any Martin. Simon would probably know. Why do you ask?"

"Oh . . . I was thinking of something Grandmother told me once. . . . Or perhaps I read it somewhere and got it mixed up with things she said. It does not matter."

The next morning being Saturday, Jacqueline went early to see Simon.

"Simon, who was Martin?"

"Martin who?"

"I don't know . . . just Martin. One of Grandmother's beaux, wasn't he?"

It seemed to Jacqueline that Simon looked startled but he answered her readily enough. "I don't recollect no Martin. But, shucks, yore grandma had more beaux than a nigger boy like me ever learned far enough to count."

"But don't you remember a very special one Grandma used to send notes to by you, named Martin somebody or other? You *must* remember. You remember everything else about those old days."

"You run along to the house and stop yer pesterin' me. I gotta git at my cleanin' up. I done told you I don't know nothin' about no Martin."

"Oh, well, if you're going to be hateful, I'll go."

"It'd be better." Jacqueline started reluctantly towards the door and Simon's eyes followed her suspiciously. "How come you askin' me erbout them there Martins?" he inquired finally.

"Oh, I don't know," said Jacqueline airily. If Simon was going to be so tantalizingly secretive she would be the same. "I guess I heard it in a dream . . . or a little bird told me."

"Humph." Simon picked up a currycomb. "It's a pity erbout you and your birds," he said scornfully.

There was no use trying to get anything out of Simon when he was in a bad humor, as Jacqueline too well knew. She would come back some other time. Simon, however, proved obdurate. No matter how good his humor Jacqueline could never coax him to remember "no Martins." The question always made him furtive and cross.

CHAPTER VII

JACQUELINE wore her organdie dress to the commencement exercises and Cousin Julia "did" her hair, curling it and catching it loosely on her head with Grandmother's tortoise-shell comb. As she was about to leave the house her father handed her a square pale green florist's box, "with my compliments," and opening it Jacqueline found a quaint old-fashioned bouquet enclosed in a lace paper frill. It was the first nosegay she had ever received, and she could not help being thrilled, especially after the girls of her class "raved" over it. Jacqueline could not be coaxed to tell who gave it to her, only smiled mysteriously when she was asked.

When she came out on the platform to make her little speech, in her pretty ruffled dress, carrying her old-fashioned bouquet, she looked so sweetly feminine, so appealingly shy and young, that a little unconscious murmur went through the audience. Probably every woman there remembered that she was motherless and yearned over her.

"I do wish her mother could have seen her," whispered Aunt Sally to Aunt Nancy, furtively wiping her eyes.

"Sssssh," whispered Aunt Nancy, "look at John."

Mr. Burrell was sitting in the back row, looking so proud and happy he almost shone. Any stranger after one glance at the audience would have known whose daughter it was who stood on the platform making her little speech. But Mr. Burrell was more than just happy

and proud—he felt somehow as the parent of the ugly duckling must have felt when it returned home miraculously blossomed into a swan. Gone all at once was the sullen-eyed, rebellious, disturbing offspring he had fathered and in her stead stood, suddenly come to life, the lovely little daughter of his dreams. Why, the child was beautiful—and she had a dignity, a grace of carriage that reminded him unexpectedly of his mother. Strange he had never noticed the resemblance before. He had never thought of Jacqueline as particularly feminine—had deplored for years her hoydenishness and lack of femininity. Now she seemed to him appealingly, pathetically feminine—lovely, delicate, fragile, a pearl above price, more precious than rubies, given into his keeping. How he would cherish her, guard her, protect her beautiful purity and innocence. He scarcely listened to what Jacqueline was saying, but kept repeating over and over to himself, "Jacqueline Burrell; my little daughter Jacqueline." And the whispered words were a prayer.

He was fearfully disappointed, when the last diploma had been awarded, the last wearisome high-sounding essay ended and he was free to leave, to find that Jacqueline had already gone off without him. He felt cheated, let down—and somewhat irritated.

"But she came with Sarah and some of the other young people. She probably did not know you expected her to go home with us," said Julia Markam sensibly. The praise of Jacqueline, her many compliments, restored him to his good humor, but he insisted upon hurrying home. So great was his need of Jacqueline, so insistent his de-

sire to be with her and make permanent that beautiful clear understanding moment that had come to him, that he felt certain she must be wanting him as much as he wanted her. He fairly made himself a nuisance hurrying the others away.

Jacqueline, meanwhile, had slipped away from Sarah and Wirt and was walking home with one of the members of the senior class—a tall blond youth named Carl Freiberg, who until this memorable evening had scarcely noticed Jacqueline, but whom Jacqueline had always admired because she thought he looked like the adored hero of "The First Violin." Sarah Sawyer thought so too and they always spoke of him when alone as "Eugene." Sarah claimed to be all in a flutter and terribly jealous when Jacqueline whispered to her that "Eugene" had asked if he could see her home.

Partly because she half wanted to be a boy and had always preferred boyish games to dolls and silly things like that, and yet found herself shut out from the close camaraderie of the superior sex, Jacqueline professed a scorn of boys and Sarah, her closest and most intimate friend and a born sentimentalist, was fearfully worried lest Jacqueline was possessed of a stony heart and would never experience the delights of falling in love. Boys liked Jacqueline well enough, but they were a little shy of her because she was quicker and smarter than most of them and never hesitated for a moment in showing it. Carl, of course, knew her only as a "kid" in the junior class. He had never until this evening thought of her as pretty or in any way attractive—in fact, he had never

thought of her at all. He was the son of an Austrian who manufactured ginger ale and soft drinks. His parents, of course, never so much as aspired to know the Burrells, but in high school Carl was a leading social light. He was a favorite with the girls, thought very well of himself.

It was a soft warm moonlight night in early fragrant June. Jacqueline wore a white taffeta cape made with a hood but with the hood thrown back, and the cape open, showing her ruffled frock. She was flushed, excited, conscious of herself and her new femininity. Carl carried his diploma in one hand, she her bouquet. Occasionally, and purposely, he touched her arm. They walked slowly, laughed a good deal over innocent nothings such as:

"I heard something about you."

"What was it?"

"I promised not to tell."

"Who said it?"

"I promised not to tell that."

"Was it nice? I know it wasn't or you would tell me."

"Well, some girls would think it nice," etc., etc., for almost a mile. Then as they turned the dark corner by Saint Benedict's church and Jacqueline was nearly home, Carl caught her hand and held it and would not let it go, although Jacqueline struggled and insisted she would never, never like him again.

"Did you like me before?"

"I don't remember."

"It's such a pretty little hand—like a flower. You're like a flower yourself, Jacqueline."

It sounded just like a book. The real Eugene might

have talked that way. Jacqueline was not used to compliments—never before had been likened to a flower.

"What a wonderful night," she said tremulously, "what a wonderful night!" They had reached her gate. Carl let go her hand and they passed through it. The long pathway that reached to the house was shaded densely by maple trees. They could scarcely see the white cement of the sidewalk beneath their feet. The house, however, was brightly lighted. Jacqueline hated to go in, hated to lose a moment of this wonderful, memorable night.

"What smells so sweet?"

"It's the syringas. Grandmother planted them before I was born."

They had reached the end of the path, and the foot of the steps leading up to the veranda. Jacqueline felt suddenly a little frightened, a little thrilled. She knew it would be wiser to hasten her good night and that if she did not Carl would probably kiss her. She was not at all sure that she wanted to be kissed, she never had been by a boy, but the night was so wonderful, the syringas so fragrant, it was all so romantic.

"You are like a flower, a white moonflower," murmured Carl thickly, and put his arms about her and kissed her. It was doubly unfortunate that Mr. Burrell chose this particular moment to throw open the front door.

Mr. Burrell had hastened home to find Jacqueline still absent. He had tried to calm himself while he smoked a cigar. After a decent interval he telephoned the Sawyers. Mrs. Sawyer answered and said that Sarah and Wirt were home and she would ask them about Jacqueline. Sarah reported that Jacqueline was walking home

with some of the senior class. Sarah had been very careful in her message and made her mother repeat it exactly. "*Some* of the senior class." That was all Mrs. Sawyer knew, but wasn't he proud of the way Jacqueline made her speech? They were all proud of her and she looked so lovely.

Mr. Burrell waited and waited. He paced up and down, he smoked another cigar, he had a drink of whiskey. Still Jacqueline did not come. Was it possible she had gone somewhere? Surely she could have crawled home on her hands and knees by this time. Perhaps she had been struck by an automobile, perhaps she was lying wounded, dead! He could stand it no longer and seized his hat and stick to go and look for her. He threw open the front door and there she stood in the full glare of the light, his little Jacqueline, his baby, his flower-like little girl, being kissed by some nincompoop he had never seen in his life.

"Jacqueline," thundered her father. Carl gave one look at him and fled ignominiously. Truly Mr. Burrell was a terrifying sight, standing there with the light streaming at his back, his arm raised threateningly, his shadow marching before him, menacing, huge. Even Jacqueline, who had never been afraid of her father, was afraid of him now. Meekly she followed him into the house, meekly she faced him across the library table.

"Who was that contemptible puppy?"

"Just . . . just a boy."

"Where did you meet him?"

"In school."

There was an interval while Mr. Burrell tried to find

out who the "puppy" was and Jacqueline would not tell. Mr. Burrell tried to calm himself, but he shook with rage. He did not realize, did not dream, that nine-tenths of it was a fury of jealousy.

"I was never so outraged, so disgusted in my life! To think a daughter of mine . . . How long has this been going on?"

"It hasn't been going on . . . at all."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I've hardly ever spoken to him alone before to-night."

"And yet . . . a girl brought up with the utmost care . . . sheltered and protected . . . Has he ever kissed you before?"

"No."

"How many other boys have you permitted similar liberties?"

"I haven't permitted any boys any liberties. I never kissed one of them in my life."

"How dare you sit there and lie to me? Do you suppose I did not see—that I am blind?"

"I did not kiss him," persisted Jacqueline sullenly. "He kissed me."

"Oh, I see. There's a fine distinction I seem to have overlooked. I suppose you will try to make me believe that you were an unwilling victim . . . that you did not encourage him and lead him on?"

This was a fine point which Jacqueline was not prepared to debate so she kept silent.

"Answer me! Answer me!" commanded Mr. Burrell, pounding on the table.

"I don't know. I didn't mean to . . . it just happened," said Jacqueline miserably. Her first kiss had been fearfully disappointing, all teeth, not at all romantic or thrilling. It would not have seemed very important if her father had not made such a fuss.

"You are brazen, utterly brazen," stormed Mr. Burrell. "Do you or do you not realize that no young man would kiss a girl the first time he was alone with her if he respected or looked up to her in the slightest degree?"

Jacqueline shook her head but kept discreetly silent. Her attitude may have shown that she was not entirely convinced of Carl's lack of respect. She was remembering that he had called her a flower—a white moonflower. That did not sound particularly disrespectful.

"Do you suppose?" demanded her father, pacing up and down the room, "do you suppose I should ever have cared for your dear mother if she had ever cheapened herself by letting every Tom, Dick and Harry in the neighborhood kiss and paw her? The very thought is revolting to me as it should be to you. I would have as soon thought of picking up a cigar some other man had half smoked as of marrying a woman who had so little discrimination, so little delicacy or fastidiousness, as to allow any man who cared to, to caress and make free with her. And yet you, my daughter and your mother's daughter, at the first opportunity . . . I am outraged. I repeat, I am outraged. There is nothing I can say that can in any way express what I feel."

Jacqueline had begun to cry. It had been a long exciting day and she was suddenly very tired. But she

rallied fiercely her drooping spirits to the defense of her feminism.

"Didn't you ever kiss anybody . . . but Mamma?" she said, and sniffed.

"Don't be impertinent."

"I'm not being impertinent. But didn't you?"

"I may have. But that is an entirely different thing."

"Why is it different?" Jacqueline was no longer crying.

"Because it is. Because we expect our wives, consecrated by Nature to motherhood, to be finer, better, more holy than ourselves."

"How about fatherhood? Anyway, I believe in a single standard." This was another phrase Jacqueline had read recently and added to her vocabulary.

Mr. Burrell stopped his angry pacing and stood rooted, glaring at the culprit, who, if she had possessed any maidenly modesty or natural feminine shame, would have had her head bowed in penitence, but who instead dared to defy him impudently.

"You evidently believe," he said witheringly, "in dragging your sex down to men's level—though I trust and hope you do not know what you are talking about."

Jacqueline herself was not very sure that she did, nor could she think of an appropriate reply. Mr. Burrell resumed his pacing back and forth in front of her.

"I had fancied this very evening," he said loftily, "that I had noticed a resemblance in you to your grandmother. If there was one thing which my mother prided in herself above all others it was her dignified self-respect. I

can only faintly imagine her sorrow and disgust if she had foreseen how little you would value yours."

Jacqueline thought of the faded letter from the mysterious Martin to her grandmother hidden in the little trunk upstairs and was tempted to fling the tale of its contents in her father's face, but she refrained, partly from an innate sense of loyalty to her grandmother and partly because she was not sure her father would not think she had done something dishonorable in reading the letter. Nevertheless, the knowledge that her grandmother had had more than one love affair gave her courage. "Do you suppose no one but Grandpa ever kissed Grandmother?" she asked.

"Certainly. To suppose anything else would be an insult to one of the finest women who ever lived—as you would realize if she had lived until you were a little older. I bitterly regret that she is not alive to-day so that you and others like you could have her to observe and pattern yourselves after."

"But suppose Grandmother had been engaged to some one else before she married Grandpa, wouldn't she have kissed him?"

"I will not suppose anything so odious or unlikely. Your grandmother was married at nineteen and I once heard my father say that he had scarcely ever been with her alone until after their marriage. I doubt whether he presumed to kiss more than her hand or brow until then. But we are not here, young lady, to discuss and disparage your sainted grandmother."

Jacqueline longed to say that her grandmother had met another man or boy secretly at night, some place

away from home beneath a tree, but she did not. It seemed safer, someway, not to talk about Grandmother.

"Do all men feel the way you do . . . that marrying some girl who has been kissed or engaged before is like smoking some other man's cigars?"

"Certainly. All men who respect themselves and honor worthy self-respecting womanhood."

"No matter *what* they have done—how many affairs they have had?"

"What they have done has nothing to do with it."

"I think it has everything to do with it," persisted Jacqueline heatedly.

"I am not interested in your opinions, but I confess your impudence and effrontery are beyond my comprehension. They render me speechless—utterly speechless. I think you had better go to bed. I may be able to decide what is best to do with you in the morning."

Jacqueline rose with dignity, gathering her cape about her. Her bouquet fell to the floor and she did not pick it up. "All I've got to say," she said, chin in air, "is that I think men who feel that way about women are beasts—pigs. They want to go out and have all the fun they want themselves with other women and leave the ones they plan to marry sitting at home with folded hands waiting until they have had their fling and are ready to settle down. Talk about revolting things! I never heard of anything so revolting in my life! If all men feel that way, I would not marry one of them for anything on earth."

"You will be fortunate to have a chance to marry at all if you continue to conduct yourself as you have to-

night. I am tempted to lock you up on bread and water. If you ever speak to me again in that contemptuous disrespectful tone you have just used, I may do something worse to you. Go to bed. Go to bed this instant."

Mr. Burrell had never before wanted to strike a woman. Even in Jacqueline's naughtiest little girlhood he had refused to lay a hand on her, but he wanted violently to smack her now and smack her hard.

Jacqueline in turn was trembling so that she could hardly stand and her efforts to hide this made her appear ugly and defiant. In her heart of hearts she felt ashamed of herself and knew that she was in the wrong. A word from her father would have sent her sobbing to his arms begging for forgiveness, but her apparent hardihood and lack of contrition, as well as the dénouement of what was to have been one of the most beautiful experiences of his life had angered him almost to the point of frenzy. Mr. Burrell did the only really cruel thing he was ever known to do.

"I had never imagined," he said cuttingly, "that I would ever come to say that I was glad your mother had been taken from us, but I am glad to-night she has been spared the disappointment and humiliation I am experiencing."

"Oh," cried Jacqueline, "oh," and fled from his presence. She never her whole life long forgave her father for the hurt he gave her then.

CHAPTER VIII

MRS. BEERSHEBA HANLEY and her daughter Hallie, of Saint Louis, were visiting their cousin, Mrs. Lou Moody, of New Concord, on upper North Fourth Street. New Concord, built on the banks of the Missouri River and hence easy of access from the South in its early steamboat days, had a large colored population which almost without exception earned its living serving the well-to-do whites. Mrs. Moody was one of darker New Concord's aristocrats, going out only occasionally to help when there was extra entertaining. Mrs. "Goat" Edwards and Mrs. Henderson, not at all aristocratic, but neighbors, had dropped in to call on Mrs. Moody and get acquainted with Mrs. Hanley and Hallie.

"I hear," said Mrs. Edwards, rocking comfortably back and forth, "that Mr. Burrell and Jac'line has had another ruckus and he's goin' to send her skittin' off to a convent."

"He's been threatenin' that for the last ten years or so," said Mrs. Moody scornfully. She had "helped out" at the Burrells for years and felt that any news of them should come from her rather than a rank outsider like Mrs. Edwards.

"But this time he means it, and her ma ain't there to stop him. Mis' Millard's already writ to the convent to find out how soon Jac'line can come."

"Who told you?"

"Mis' Cunningham." Mis' Cunningham washed for the Burrells. There could be no better authority. Mrs. Moody was torn between curiosity and jealousy. Curiosity won.

"Well, I ain't much surprised. They're most generally fightin' about one thing or another. Did Mis' Cunningham say what it was about this time?"

"Her papa caught her carryin' on with some man. Mis' Cunningham couldn't rightly say who it 'twere, but she thinks it must have been Mr. Bowman."

This caused a laugh from the three New Concordites and it had to be explained to the visitors that Mr. Bowman was an elderly bachelor who had started out twenty-five years before squiring the sweet young girl graduates of his own age but kept dropping back year by year to the younger girls as they came on until he was now triumphantly keeping up with the flappers.

"For the land's sake," said Hallie. "What does she want with an old man? Can't she get nobody her own age?"

"That was just some of Mis' Cunningham's foolishness," explained Mrs. Moody. "Jac'line ain't botherin' her head with no worn-out nobodies like Mr. Bowman. When her time comes Jac'line can take her pick of any man in this town. She's one of the pertest young ones I ever knew and havin' her papa's pockets lined with gold ain't goin' to hurt her chances none. But, laws, she's startin' in kind of early. She don't hardly seem more'n a baby to me."

Mrs. Henderson, a meek little person much in awe of Mrs. Moody, had been trying to speak for some time. Now she found her opportunity.

"When Mr. Henderson went after the garbage this mornin' and happened to be passin' by the dinin'-room window he heard Mis' Jac'line say plain as paint to her papa, 'I ain't goin' to no convent and you can't make me.' "

"No-o?" chorused her audience delightedly. "What did her papa say?"

"Mr. Henderson said her papa said a-plenty. He banged his fist on the table ontil the dishes hopped up and down like so many jumping frogs and said he'd learn her who was master in that house and whether she'd go where she was sent. He was mad clean through, Mr. Henderson said, but so was she. She kept on sayin' that she wouldn't go to no convent and he couldn't make her and every time she said it, Mr. Henderson said, she sounded more and more as ef she meant it."

"Where's her ma?" asked Mrs. Hanley, who sat in a corner and until now had hardly spoken.

They explained that Mrs. Burrell was dead, Jac'line an only child. Not until the callers had left did Mrs. Hanley display further interest in the Burrells. Then she asked her cousin whether there was any chance of her getting the Burrell place. "Sounds as ef it might suit me," she said. "Ef the young lady's goin' off to school and the old lady's dead, I think it's jest what I'm lookin' for."

"Well, Mis' Smith and that Corey girl are workin' there now, but Mis' Smith's goin' to quit and the Corey girl don't suit. It 'twouldn't be no trouble for you and Hallie to get the place if you wait long enough. The help never do stay long at the Burrells'. Mis' Burrell was as nice a little lady as ever lived but Mr. Burrell's

one of them born old maids who likes to go nosin' round interferin' jest to make himself feel big. He ain't ever so much as boiled a stewpan of water, but he got hold of the idea that he's an honest to God cook and he's forever bringin' home somethin' onheard of to eat and tellin' the cook outlandish ways of fixin' it. Mis' Smith says he most drives her crazy."

"Don't he work?"

"Well, he do and he don't. He's got his office down town for practicin' law, but his pa left him his house and a barrel of money. He keeps himself busy takin' care of his money and of his sisters' money and of the money of a lot of widow ladies, but I reckon he don't have to hurt himself much workin'. He does all the buying for his house—always has during the twenty years I've worked for him. He's a nice enough gentleman—jest kind of fussy and nosey."

"I wouldn't mind his nosin' round and 'tain't necessary to listen when he's tellin' me how to cook. I'd ruther put up with that than have a lady after me all day long. Think I'll look the place over."

"Well, Mis' Smith told me herself, she was leavin' the first of the month so I can't see no harm in takin' you over and introducin' you to Mis' Jac'line. I reckon we'll have to begin Missin' her now that she's most grown up."

"I was figgerin' on gettin' the old gentleman to do the hirin'," said Mrs. Hanley shrewdly. "Ef he's like you say, he'll probably think more of me ef he picks me out himself—specially when he's mad at the girl."

"Ain't you the smart one?" cried Mrs. Moody admiringly. "I never would have thought of that. I'll take

you right down to his office in the mornin'. Maybe we can find out whether or not Jac'line's goin' to that convent. She's awful high sperrited and if she's put her foot down and said she won't go, I'd like to find out how he's figurin' to get around her."

Mr. Burrell at that moment, and many moments before, had been wondering that same thing. During that terrible night that followed his quarrel with Jacqueline he had not slept a wink and his moods had ranged from a truly ungodly rage to one of acute and almost tearful self-pity. Never, he felt, had a loving father been so flouted and scorned. It was not alone that Jacqueline had misbehaved, had conducted herself as no right-minded, self-respecting girl with the slightest pretensions to breeding and delicacy would have dreamed of doing, but when he, her father, had attempted to reason with her, perhaps a little impatiently but with the kindliest, the most unselfish of motives, she had not only defied him but practically called him a beast and a pig. All men, she had said, who expected their wives or daughters to be a little superior, a little purer, and more discriminating than themselves, were beasts and pigs! What the modern generation was coming to, he shuddered to think. He, one of the most high-minded respected men in his community to be called a pig—and by his own daughter! To his very face! One might have thought it was *he* who had been misconducting himself and had been caught kissing some feminine nincompoop in the front yard after midnight. If Jacqueline had been blessed with *some* fathers he could name—but a man of *his* self-respect, *his* standing, who had never had the

slightest breath of scandal attached to his name, whose conduct aside from some natural indiscretions in his earliest years had certainly always been above reproach . . . to be called a beast . . . a pig!! And revolting!! *His* ideas were revolting in Miss Jacqueline's eyes!! She who allowed every young upstart to kiss her . . . ! He could not bear the thought of it. She was not worth bothering about. He would wash his hands of her. He would go to sleep and stop thinking about her. She was certainly not a true Burrell or a Digges. There must have been some unfortunate strain in the Phillips family he had never heard about. To call him a pig!! To his very face!

Long, long before daylight Mr. Burrell had determined to send Jacqueline to a convent in Saint Louis and to send her there as quickly as possible. He knew, of course, that Jacqueline would probably object to going. He rather hoped, indeed, that she would object. He was not sending her away as a reward but as a punishment. That she might refuse point blank to go never entered his head. Jacqueline had been impudent, self-willed, obstreperous, many times before, but she had never openly defied his authority or refused to obey him. He made his plans, consulted his sisters (but without telling them more than that he felt it was time Jacqueline went away to school), wrote his letters and received replies and then broke the news to his daughter about a week after their quarrel when relations were still somewhat more than strained.

Jacqueline, however, was not unprepared. She, too, after the momentous and stormy finale to her first ten-

tative dabble into the glories of Romance, had spent a sleepless night when she alternately wept and raged. But when she grew calmer, the first thing she asked herself was what her father would do next. He had held the threat of the convent over her for years and it would be his first thought, Jacqueline felt certain. When he said nothing the following day or the next she began to wonder whether she had misjudged him; but when her Aunt Sally came to see her on the third day, full of mysterious hints and references to a "surprise" that she was to hear about very soon, Jacqueline guessed at once what it was all about and wormed the whole story out of her aunt without any trouble at all.

Aunt Sally, and Aunt Nancy as well, painted very pleasant pictures of their convent days and at first Jacqueline was not at all sure she did not want to go there—anything to get away from home. But from her very earliest years, her mother's Presbyterian dread of a convent had been communicated to her and the more she thought about it the less she approved. Mamma had not wanted her to go to a convent. Mamma had wanted her to go to college. It was outrageous of Papa to try to make her do something Mamma had not wanted her to do. Her anger at her father did not lessen. She reminded herself a dozen times a day that her father had said he was glad, actually glad, her mother was dead and spared the humiliation and disappointment he was experiencing. Jacqueline had never been hard, never for more than a moment of childish anger had wanted deliberately to hurt any one, but now she wanted fiercely to hurt her father as he had hurt her. If Mr. Burrell in

a later and more desperate crisis found his daughter hard, even ruthless, certainly he was not altogether blameless. He laid the seeds of it the night he told her he was glad, because of her, that her mother was dead.

So when Mr. Burrell announced to Jacqueline one morning at breakfast that she was to be sent away to a convent in a little more than two months' time, Jacqueline was all ready for him. She had been putting sugar and cream on her raspberries and sampled two or three before she answered. "I'm sorry, Papa, to disappoint you," she said finally, "but Mamma never wanted me to go to a convent and it is impossible for me to do anything I know Mamma would not want me to do."

Mr. Burrell could hardly believe his ears. At first, however, he did not take Jacqueline's defiance seriously. He pooh poohed her answer, inquired with heavy sarcasm just what she *did* propose to do. Jacqueline made a great effort to appear calm although her heart was pounding so she felt it could be heard across the room. She had no definite plans as yet, she said, but she would run away, she would go to work, she would clerk in a store or scrub floors, but she WOULD NOT GO TO A CONVENT AND HE COULD NOT MAKE HER! Nothing and nobody in the world could force her to do something SHE KNEW HER MOTHER WOULD NOT WANT HER TO DO!!

If she had put her refusal on any other grounds, Mr. Burrell might not have been so angry. But to be impudent, disobedient and then attempt to put him in the wrong by assuming a self-righteous motive was more than Mr. Burrell's already over-burdened temper could stand. He lost his head altogether, pounded on the table,

fairly shouted at Jacqueline, made many positive and reckless statements, committed himself irrevocably to enforcing his authority. Fuming and raging, he banged his way out of the front door. That chit . . . that impudent self-willed chit!! He'd show her! She should have been taken in hand years ago. But he'd show her now . . . no matter *what* happened, he'd show her who was master in *his* house. . . . It was some hours later before he was calm enough to face the question squarely and ask himself just how he was going to do it.

Jacqueline was seventeen. He couldn't exactly pack her up and carry her kicking and screaming to the convent. She was too old to whip, although that was exactly what she needed. If he locked her in her room on bread and water she would either stay there and make a martyr of herself to spite him or escape and cause a town scandal—perhaps run away with that young whelp he had caught kissing her the other night. Sorrow, suffering, even tragedy, Mr. Burrell could endure with fitting dignity, but he would rather have died than face a scandal in his family.

Mr. Burrell's real religion, though he was totally unconscious of it, was his family pride. One of the things that had caused him the most annoyance in his life was the irritating habit strangers, and even some of his townspeople, had of calling him Burwell instead of Burrell. Old Judge Holcomb, the town wit, had once said that John might easily have become president of the United States or a second J. Pierpont Morgan if he expended a tenth of the energy in politics or business that he did in correcting those who mispronounced his name. Mr.

Burrell, however, had never had the slightest desire to become president or as wealthy as Mr. Morgan, and he did passionately desire to hand down to posterity his fine old name uncorrupted into a vulgar Burwell. The thought of the slightest breath of scandal attaching itself to that name would have been inconceivably upsetting but of course such a thought had never until now remotely occurred to him.

Mr. Burrell had loved and admired his wife, and her antecedents (as far as he knew) of course were irreproachable—had not he married her?—but now with these dreadful developments in his offspring he could but feel it a pity that Jacqueline had to have a mother at all. His daughter never could have shamed him if he had been able to reproduce the species unaided, like some thing-a-bob he had read of somewhere. Then Jacqueline would have been all that he had dreamed her —half Burrell, half Digges, or possibly more Digges than Burrell, since, if he could, he would have patterned her almost exactly after his mother, born a Digges. No prescience of ghastly revelations to come shadowed his fatuous pride.

Yet Mr. Burrell, however much he might criticize her, was as loyal to his child as he was sensitive and proud and not even to his sisters did he ever admit that he and Jacqueline had seriously disagreed. It would have humiliated and distressed him beyond words if he had guessed that their latest quarrel was already common knowledge and town talk. Mr. Burrell was fond of low modulated voices in women, but it never occurred to him to modulate his own when he was angry any more than

it occurred to him that Gus Henderson, who carted away his garbage, would dare to plant himself beneath his dining-room window in order not to miss a word of what was going on, or his cook and housemaid and laundress listen shamelessly at the pass pantry door.

Days passed and Mr. Burrell was fearfully unhappy. He went on making preparations to send Jacqueline to the convent, wrote letters, signed papers, but all the time he was in a panic. He had never realized before how much he had counted on Mrs. Burrell to back him up and enforce his authority. Always before when he and Jacqueline had come to an impasse, Emily had been there to work on Jacqueline's feelings, to cry and beg her not to hurt and misunderstand "poor Papa." Always before, Jacqueline had yielded to her mother's tears, but now she showed no signs of yielding. Mr. Burrell would have given a thousand dollar bill if he could have opened his morning paper and read that a particular convent in Saint Louis had been burned to the ground. It was a terrible situation. He had taken his stand and could not back down. And he hadn't an idea what in the world he could do.

It was during this unhappy period that Mrs. Moody brought her cousins to call upon him in his office. They proved a welcome diversion.

"Why, how do you do, Carrie?" he said cordially. "Come in, come in! What can I do for you?"

"Howdy, Mr. Burrell. You're lookin' fine as usual. There ain't nothin' you can do for me just now, but I heard that Mis' Smith was quittin' up to your house and I brung my cousins Sheeby and Hallie to see about

gettin' the place. I think I know somethin' about cookin' myself, but Sheeby here can beat me all hollow."

Mr. Burrell was a little dubious. He was not sure Jacqueline had not already hired some one else. Sheeby produced excellent references and she looked dependable. Hallie, too, appeared neat and good natured, a pleasant face to have about the house. As he hesitated Sheeby flattered him shrewdly, said she liked to work for gentlemen, told him she had heard he too knew a lot about "cookin'," professed herself willing and anxious to learn from him.

Mr. Burrell was something of a gourmand. He was always on the lookout for game or other choice delicacies and took pains to find out just how they should be prepared. Some of the happiest moments of his life had been spent in imparting this knowledge in minute detail to a visibly admiring and properly obsequious menial. Unfortunately, most of the menials who accepted his pay and worked in his kitchen were not at all obsequious and seemed to have a temperamental aversion for the slightest advice or suggestion on his part. But this Sheeby looked like an intelligent woman and her manners were deferential like those of the old-fashioned darkies he had known in his boyhood. Moreover, if Carrie said she could cook, there could be no doubt about it. What if Jacqueline had hired some one else? What if he *had* told her to? He went to the telephone and called her. Yes, she had hired the two Hopkins sisters. "Tell them not to come. Tell them I've found somebody better."

"But, Papa, I've already engaged them. They worked for Mrs. Drury and she said she never had a better pair

in her house. They're just exactly what I've been looking for."

"Tell them you've changed your mind."

"But I can't. I've definitely engaged them. I've *got* to give them some reason."

"Tell them your father has engaged some one else—give them a week's pay if necessary, but tell them not to come."

"But, Papa, you told me to get some one. I can't . . ."

"We'll not argue the matter. It's quite settled."

"But whom have you . . ."

Mr. Burrell hung up the telephone. It assuaged somewhat his panic, his feeling of impotence, to assert himself definitely over something which Jacqueline was powerless to change. She was, of course, very angry and they both let off a good deal of accumulated steam when they discussed the affair. Jacqueline was particularly indignant because Sheeby had gone to her father instead of to her, she having had charge of the household since her mother's death. When Sheeby and Hallie came she treated them with a large haughtiness, ignored them as much as possible. That Sheeby proved a genius with a saucepan, that Hallie was endlessly good natured, willing, companionable, did not reconcile her to their having been engaged behind her back. She would have been much more indignant, made a more determined fight if she had not been saving her energies for a larger matter. Like her father, she had taken her stand and meant to stick by it. Cooks might come and cooks might go, but never, never would she go to a convent.

CHAPTER IX

It was Jacqueline who saved the situation finally, with the aid of her second cousin Julia Markam, who lived next door. Mrs. Markam was the daughter of a first cousin of Mr. Burrell's and twenty-five years younger than he. She was a reserved woman, childless and somewhat self-centered, and Jacqueline had decided at an early age that she was "snooty" and cold. After his wife's death, Mr. Burrell relied a good deal on her judgment of what was best for his daughter, for a time to Jacqueline's resentment. Later she realized with a warm glow of pleasure and surprise that she could actually "talk" to Cousin Julia. Jacqueline had never dreamed that there really existed a grown-up, and particularly a grown-up relation, who would talk to her as one intelligent person to another. Cousin Julia did not always agree with Jacqueline, far from it, but she always gave her reasons sensibly and intelligently and listened in the same spirit to Jacqueline's. More often than not Cousin Julia would turn out to be right, but when, as sometimes happened, Jacqueline had the better of the argument, she said at once that she was wrong and Jacqueline right, instead of trying to wiggle out of it by asserting her authority as an elder, or by an appeal to Jacqueline's feelings; or worse still, by attempting to create a diversion with sentimental or offensive comparisons of the present generation with those preceding it. Naturally then, it

was to Cousin Julia that Jacqueline turned when the situation at home came to the point when she could not solve it herself.

"I suppose you have heard," said Jacqueline to her, "that Papa is kicking and screaming and holding his breath trying to make me go to that old convent in St. Louis." It was a warm, sunny afternoon in late June and Mrs. Markam, who was devoted to her garden, was snipping off dried tulip leaves in the borders of shrubbery near her house. She was kneeling on a straw mat and now seated herself on it and faced Jacqueline who had thrown herself on the grass and sat nursing her knees.

"Yes, I did hear something of the kind, but I thought if you needed help you would let me know."

"I'm not the one who's in need of help—it's Papa," answered Jacqueline. "He's said I have to go and I've said I wouldn't, and he knows he can't make me. He's up a tree and realizes it perfectly but hasn't the slightest idea how to climb down."

"And you want me to help him down?"

"Perhaps—even though he deserves to stay up there. You know, Cousin Julia, when I get married I don't think I'll have any children."

"Have you told your father so?"

"Heavens, no. We hardly speak. Haven't you *ever seen* Papa when he was good and mad?"

"Not often, fortunately. But what's he got to do with your having children?"

"Well, I don't know, but I read a play in a magazine lately called, 'Are Parents People?' I don't think I ever met a parent who was, so I think it must be having the

children that does it. Anyway, I can't bear the thought of having my children grow up and look down on me the way I look down on Papa."

"Jacqueline, you are outrageous."

"Well, it's a fact whether I am outrageous or not."

Mrs. Markam laughed. "My father was a judge—was supposed to have one of the finest minds in the state—and yet I can remember that I used to consider him just this side of weak minded. And really, where I was concerned, he usually was."

"There, you see. With other people I suppose Papa behaves perfectly sanely and sensibly, but when he comes to me he hasn't any sense at all."

Jacqueline wore a dress of Chinese blue linen and Mrs. Markam thought how pretty she looked with the deep glowing pink of the American pillar rose which covered an old stump just behind her reflecting a little color in her cheeks.

"I'm glad to see you in colors, my dear. Blue is your color. It's lovely beside that pink and the green of the grass. I must have more blue flowers. But, going back to your father. You know you must have been misbehaving or he would not want to send you away."

"Well . . . I did . . . act rather silly, but I was sorry enough afterwards. And is that any reason for Papa's trying to force me to do something Mamma would not want me to do?"

Mrs. Markam looked hard at her young cousin. "That's clever of you, Jacqueline, and you know it, but hardly a reason for disobeying your father. Your mother hoped you would go to college, but you have never

shown any mad desire to follow out her wishes along that line."

"I've hardly thought about it, but I know I would lose my mind shut up in a convent. Papa would know it too if he had any sense—or gave a darn."

"I wouldn't worry if I were you about losing my mind, but you are the type that should be sent to college, and if you mean to go you ought to begin preparing yourself as soon as possible. Do you think there is any chance of persuading your father to send you to a preparatory school this fall?"

"Ye Gods! Cousin Julia, reason and common sense are about as effective with Papa now as saying, 'Kitty, Kitty, pretty Kitty,' to a starving man-eating tiger who caught you alone in a jungle. If I remark to him politely that white is white, he takes it as a personal insult and accuses me of knowing all the while that it is yellow. And then, if I strive to please and agree that it was my mistake, he flies into a second rage and insists that of course I knew from the beginning that it was green. It's a happy life we live at our house. I keep a mirror under my pillow and take a look first thing every morning to see if my hair has turned white over night."

Mrs. Markam tried unsuccessfully not to laugh. "I really ought not to allow you to say such things about your poor father."

"Now, Cousin Julia, you needn't begin trying to pretend you are sorry for Papa. You know perfectly well if I gave in now I'd be a worse slave to him than Mamma ever was."

"Jacqueline, you *must not* talk that way."

"Why not? It's true, isn't it? She *was* a slave, practically, to Papa's whims and selfishness. He'd like me to be a slave too and he's furious because he can't put it over."

"There's something in what you say," agreed Mrs. Markam thoughtfully. "Most of the men of his generation and the generation before him grew as a matter of course into rather terrible old men. It wasn't altogether their fault, however."

"Whose fault was it, then?"

"The fault of custom, habit. Power over other human beings is probably the most dangerous and abused thing in the history of the world. For a long time men have had the upper hand over women and naturally they take it hard—kick and scream as you say—when they see their power and privileges slipping away from them. But it's been terribly bad for them and the poor dears must be frightfully unhappy when they get old and realize that nobody cares for them and they can't understand why. I imagine that the men who are young now will develop into much more kindly and reasonable old men than their fathers."

"I hope so," said Jacqueline, "at least they couldn't be much worse than some I could mention."

"Well, all these heavy excursions into the realms of philosophy don't get us very far," remarked Cousin Julia dryly. "Have you any plans about what you'll do next —or what you want me to do next? I judge you have."

"I haven't exactly planned it all out, but it *does* seem obvious that Papa and I would be better apart for a while. Papa has a new plaything in the shape of Sheeby,

our latest chef, whom he engaged himself just to spite me. Sheeby is a natural born bootlicker and apparently supplies a long felt want in our family. She fairly throws the flattery at him by the shovelful and he eats it up. If I weren't there Papa would have the time of his life, but every time he looks at me all the innocent milk of his enjoyment turns sour. I do think I could be better employed than staying home making him suffer."

"I think you could be. I'm going out to Colorado Springs a little later. I might take you along."

"Heavens, Cousin Julia, you don't think Papa would let me go any place where I might *enjoy* myself—or where he *thinks* I might enjoy myself? You don't seem to realize that I am the deepest dyed villainess that ever was born and Hell has no horrors that I don't deserve. He wants to send me to the convent because it's the worst punishment he can think of, but they won't take me there until September. I just thought that if some other punishment that would take effect immediately could be dangled before his eyes, he would jump at it and be glad to forget the convent in September if no one mentioned it to him."

"I see. You may be right. Just what particular punishment have you picked out that will make you suffer as much as you deserve?"

"I've been dying to go to camp for ages, but fortunately Papa doesn't know it. I thought if you suggested a camp to him and told him how strict they are at camp and if I yowled hard enough in protest he'd send me there like a shot. If you added that you met me hand in hand on the wood road with a tall handsome unknown blond

youth there'd be no doubts about it, and Papa's mind and reason saved to a grateful world. I'm not joking, Cousin Julia, when I say that Papa will go all to pieces if he goes on at the present rate. He doesn't eat anything. I see his light on at all hours of the night and he's lost *pounds*. It's hard enough on me, goodness knows, but at least I'm young. Papa is sixty-three years old."

"Jacqueline, I ought to turn you over my knees. I simply won't be a party to deceiving your father in this odious manner."

Jacqueline leaned back on her arms and regarded thoughtfully an inquisitive, bright-eyed robin in a neighboring maple tree. "If you can think of a better plan, Cousin Julia, you have my permission to try it. This is the best I can do and I've given a lot of weighty thought to the matter."

"I don't like it. I don't like deceit in any form. I don't like to see you at your age getting around your father by deceitful methods."

"Cousin Julia, aside from being a parent, Papa isn't an utter idiot, is he?"

"Certainly not. You know he has the reputation of being one of the shrewdest lawyers in New Concord."

"Well, did it ever occur to you that he might welcome a chance to be deceived? Papa's in a terrible fix, really, and he's got to save his face and this is the only way I can think of. I won't, I positively will not, go to the convent and he knows it. He's tried everything in the world except a hunger strike to make me go and I believe he'd try that if he thought of it. I'm honestly trying to help him out."

"Jacqueline, are you trying to get around me too?"

"Cousin Julia, you *know* I am always perfectly frank with you. I don't try to get around people and I'm not deceitful. Heaven knows I *want* to treat Papa like a human being and if I can't it's because he won't let me."

"I beg your pardon, Jacqueline, I was unjust. One of the things I like best about you is your honesty and your courage in facing squarely many of the things most of us try to dodge or cover up. If I, in my own way, suggest sending you to camp and your father agrees, will you be willing to go to a first class preparatory school this fall and put in a year's hard digging getting ready for college?"

"I'll agree to anything except the convent."

"But do you care anything about going to college? Your mother's heart was set on it and she often talked about it to me. Bryn Mawr was her favorite."

"If Mamma really wanted me to, I want to go."

"There's no use going unless you are willing to work and get the best out of it. You have a mind, Jacqueline, and it's a shame to waste it. You can get a lot out of college if you take it the right way. If I help you out now you've got to promise me to work hard and put your best into it. Will you?"

Jacqueline gave the promise and then startled her cousin by bursting into a storm of tears. Mrs. Markam got her into the house and upstairs into her bedroom, where she made her lie down, bathed her forehead, mothered her awkwardly. Not until then did the older woman realize how nervous and keyed up Jacqueline was, how thin she had grown. Why, the child's arms and

legs were like sticks and she was trembling all over like a leaf! Mrs. Markam's face was grim as she marched over to the Burrells' late that afternoon leaving Jacqueline still lying down. What she said to Mr. Burrell in an interview that lasted over an hour Jacqueline never found out, but preparations were immediately begun to send Jacqueline away to camp.

Two weeks later Mr. Burrell accompanied his daughter to Kansas City and turned her over to a chaperon and a group of girls bound for New Hampshire. Father and daughter parted stiffly and formally. Mr. Burrell pitied himself ardently all the way home. And Jacqueline, although she had won her first real victory over her father, found it was not such a fine thing after all. She told herself fiercely that she hated her father and did not care if she never saw him again. Then she cried all night because he had only kissed her forehead when he said good-by.

Jacqueline was very homesick at first, was emotional and difficult to handle and given to violent fits of crying when she longed for her mother until she wanted to die. But every one was anxious to be kind to her and after the first two or three weeks she made friends and began to take pleasure in learning to swim and ride and fence. When Cousin Julia met her in the fall at the Grand Central station in New York Jacqueline was so brown and healthy and jolly that Mrs. Markam hardly knew her until Jacqueline pounced on her with a bear-like hug. It had been settled that Jacqueline should enter a preparatory school near Philadelphia and not go home until Christmas time, Cousin Julia having decided that the

longer the interval before Jacqueline renewed old associations the better, Mr. Burrell consenting. Mr. Burrell was very meek those days and agreed even to enter her for college although he had never made it a secret that he thought a higher education for women not only unnecessary but unfitting.

Mrs. Markam and Jacqueline had a joyous week in New York choosing the latter's outfit for school although they had several battles over the selection of Jacqueline's clothes, but in the end the girl learned reluctantly to respect her cousin's judgment—especially after she had been in school awhile and learned how right her things were and how much they influenced the other girls in judging and placing her.

Jacqueline had many things to learn in school besides her lessons. She had first to discover that a member of one of the oldest and most prominent families in North Eastern Kansas did not count for much in a select and restricted Eastern school where many of the girls came from parents both nationally and internationally famous and where the very word Kansas, for some unaccountable reason, seemed to be cause for laughter. She had to learn to stand squarely on her own feet, to tease and be teased, quickly to give and take and adjust herself to a hundred varying personalities. Jacqueline, however, had already begun to learn some of these things at camp and she was always quick and adaptable. Moreover, she was an unusually good student, a leader in athletics, and by the end of her first term stood as well as any girl in her class. She was very anxious to enter college the following autumn and may have overworked for at Christmas

time she caught cold and the day she was to start home for her mid-winter vacation was in the infirmary with a bad case of tonsilitis. Her Aunt Sally, her Aunt Nancy and her Cousin Julia telegraphed asking if she wanted them to come on, and her father called the doctor by long distance with the same inquiry, but she was not ill enough to make their coming necessary or advisable. At Easter time her father came East and took her and her roommate to New York on a three days' fling where the girls ran the party and had the time of their lives, but Mr. Burrell and Jacqueline were never for a minute alone. In June Jacqueline took her examinations for college and passed without a condition. She was free now, free until September, free after fourteen months of exile to go home where she belonged, to her father and aunts and cousins and friends—and old Simon who loved her and whom she loved as much as anybody else. All across the continent the wheels of the train sang to her happily, "You're going home! You're going home!! You're going home!!!"

CHAPTER X

JACQUELINE, during her long absence, had been too busy meeting new problems to think much about the cook and housemaid her father had installed over her protests before she left home, but Sheeby and Hallie, or more particularly Sheeby, had thought a great deal about Jacqueline. Sheeby had realized long before the end of her first summer at Mr. Burrell's that never again could she hope to find another place that would so suit her down to the ground. Knowing that Jacqueline distrusted her, Sheeby decided that the best thing she could do would be to establish herself as firmly as possible in the good graces of Mr. Burrell. Consequently, she set herself to study him and find out just what things pleased him most and what other things or conditions distressed or "riled" him. With the genius of her race she had discerned almost at first glance his weakness for flattery and soon grew adroit in twisting small unimportant happenings to feed or assuage his vanity. When Mr. Burrell attended Mrs. Ed Alger's annual "surprise" birthday dinner for Mr. Alger, Sheeby told her employer next day that she had heard from Carrie Moody, who had it from Kate Preston the cateress, that Mr. Alger's colored Tom who waited on the table was so overcome by mirth at Mr. Burrell's jokes and witticisms that he had all but burst a blood vessel trying not to laugh out loud in the dining-room. When Mr. Biggers of New Concord was chosen

instead of Mr. Burrell to speak at the yearly meeting of the Kansas State Bar Association in Topeka, Sheeby claimed to have learned from similarly direct back door routes that both "Jedge" Reynolds and Mr. Howard, the editor, had agreed that Mr. Burrell could have sewed up his mouth and made a better speech than Mr. Biggers and that they "reckoned" Mr. Biggers had been invited only because of Mr. Burrell's recent mourning.

Sheeby had hardly expected Mr. Burrell to accept her fancies as gospel truths, but when she found him swallowing them whole and asking for more she gave her inventive faculties full sway. At first she kept these titbits for his delectation when he came into her kitchen to instruct or confer with her—from the first she had always welcomed these visits with every manifestation of pleasure, laughing loudly at her employer's jokes, agreeing admiringly with all his instructions—but later, sensing that Mr. Burrell was bitterly lonely without his wife and Jacqueline, she took it upon herself to amuse and entertain him, and when they were alone helped Hallie in waiting on the table. Sheeby had the true artistic temperament and was never one to spare herself when she felt her efforts were understood or properly appreciated. Just as Mr. Burrell's praise of her culinary successes stimulated her to expend infinite care and patience in planning and preparing his meals, his equal appreciation of her attempts to lighten his loneliness incited her to shine in a new rôle.

She was soon not content to stop at mere easy flattery. Her work being light, she found plenty of time for "visitin' round," and before long she became expert

in running down bits of news or gossip of both blacks and whites that might serve to amuse or interest Mr. Burrell. When Parson Alderson of Darkeytown was caught calling once too often on the fascinating Mrs. Pansy Blue, Sheeby was able next day to give a racy account of just what Mr. Blue said to the parson, what the parson said to Mr. Blue and what the two Blues said to each other. When the extravagant Mrs. Stevens, who had entertained New Concord's upper white circles six times in rapid succession, was forbidden by her lord to give another party that season and attempted unsuccessfully to pull off a luncheon unbeknown to him, Sheeby knew to an ounce just how much the turkey weighed that Mr. Stevens threw smoking hot out of the kitchen window, just what Mrs. Stevens said over the telephone in cancelling her invitations, how many hours she cried and how many days she sulked before deciding to let bygones be bygones.

Nor was this all that Sheeby did for Mr. Burrell. When he was ill she nursed him, when his birthday came around she engineered a surprise party on him where the excellence of the dinner she turned out was commented upon for weeks. It was Sheeby who encouraged Mr. Burrell to entertain, especially his men friends, and who often suggested that he invite Mr. Minor, or Mr. Schoup, or Mr. White for a meal. When invitations came to Mr. Burrell in return, it was Sheeby again who decided that he ought to accept and who put the studs in his dress shirt when the occasion was grand enough to warrant evening clothes. When he was dressed and ready to leave it was Sheeby and Hallie who saw him off, exclaiming admiringly at his appearance, but it was Sheeby alone

who sat up for him, keeping his fire going in winter and a cool or hot drink for him according to season.

Mr. Burrell, though Kansas born, was Southern enough to consider he was condescending when he let himself go and was as natural and companionable with the negroes as his inclination and "raising" led him to be. Moreover, he had not grown up with the darkies for nothing and he knew that they thoroughly understood that he was condescending. Since Sheeby amused him he made a great deal of her and allowed her many more liberties than he would have dreamed of allowing a white servant. He laughed loudly at her jokes in her presence and afterwards told them about town, giving her due credit, and regaled her in turn with many a good joke or story. He never failed to compliment her when a sauce was particularly smooth or well flavored or a steak unusually succulent or broiled to a turn, and when his guests exclaimed (as they always did) over the deliciousness of their fare, he took delight in marshaling them out to the kitchen so that they would repeat their praises in Sheeby's hearing. Mr. Burrell continued to do much of the buying for his table, but he allowed Sheeby to order whatever else she pleased and paid all bills without comment. As long as his bed was properly made, his bathroom reasonably clean and his bedroom and the library dusted, he bothered not at all about the rest of his home and resented quickly any criticism from his sisters of the way he kept house.

No wonder then, after fourteen months of this blissful accord, that Sheeby should be hurt, indignant and thoroughly upset when Mr. Burrell was transformed without

the slightest warning into a perfect whirlwind of meddling officiousness just because the postman brought him a letter announcing the date of Mis' Jac'line's return. He began by making insulting remarks about the condition the house was in, he demanded that it be cleaned from cellar to garret, insisted upon carpets and rugs being taken up and beaten, curtains being taken down and cleaned, woodwork washed. He fussed, he fidgeted, he stayed home from his office for no reason at all but to interfere and make life insupportable to the harassed and distracted Sheeby and Hallie. He went poking into closets and behind mirrors; he was thrown into a perfect frenzy because his hand happened to encounter a little dust on the banister when he descended the stairs. Worse still, he had in his sisters and "Mis' Markam" and away they went snooping round, making more work, finding more uncleaned closets and shelves, insisting that the floors which already had been polished until a body could see his face in them should be thoroughly scrubbed and polished all over again.

"We don't seem to suit here no longer," said Sheeby darkly to Hallie. "I reckon we'd better be movin' on."

"Ah, Ma, you know Mis' Jac'line didn't bother us none when she was here before. Anyways, she'll be goin' back to school in September."

Sheeby had no real intention of abandoning a place that suited her so exactly and she was wise enough to realize that nothing was ever perfect in this far from satisfactory world, but it relieved her temper to grumble and make threats to Hallie. All this fuss over one good-for-nothin' girl, comin' home from school! A person *might* think

she was a queen from the trouble "they" went to. Flowers in all the rooms, roast capon for dinner along with fresh strawberry ice cream and the Lord only knowed what else; her papa flying 'round like a chicken with its head cut off, and that old devil Simon poppin' in and out of the house as ef he owned it! It made Sheeby, for one, right sick. Of course, if Hallie wanted to stay and put up with it, she could—a mother's rights were nothin' of course—but as for herself there were plenty of places open and she didn't have to take nothin' from nobody. Ef Miss Highty Tighty meant to mind her own business and let Sheeby tend to her'n, all right and good. Ef she didn't (and Sheeby was darkly certain she wouldn't), well, jest let her look out! Sheeby claimed to have the patience of a Job, the long suffering kindness of a ministering angel, but even Job and the angels could be pushed too far, and ef ennybody was goin' to start enny pushin', Sheeby would learn them a thing or two mighty quick.

The first few days of Jacqueline's homecoming were almost disappointingly peaceful. Jacqueline was bursting with happiness to be home again, ready to be pleased with anything, said right out that there wasn't a chef in any hotel or restaurant in New York that could serve a meal that would touch the one Sheeby cooked the night she arrived. But after Jacqueline had unpacked and settled down, things did not go so smoothly. For one thing, Jacqueline was forever having her friends in without giving any but the most tardy and perfunctory notice to Sheeby. She would go casually to the telephone and invite one or two or half a dozen to lunch or tea and then send Hallie out to tell her mother about it. Worse

still, when her friends dropped in to see her, she would invite them to stay for a meal, particularly for afternoon tea, without ever troubling to find out whether there was any food in the house or not. Sheeby particularly resented the afternoon tea habit. Whoever heard of grown-ups eating in the middle of the afternoon unless they were having a party? A body *would* think that a big, husky girl who ate as hearty as Mis' Jac'line at her meals would be able to survive from lunch to dinner without having to have tea and sandwiches and cake almost every afternoon. But apparently she couldn't. It kept Sheeby busy from morning to night doing nothing at all but bake cakes and slice bread for sandwiches. And did Mis' Jac'line and her friends appreciate the trouble they caused or the lusciousness of the viands they consumed in such quantities? Apparently not. At least they never bothered to come out to the kitchen and tell Sheeby about it. All they did was to gobble up their food as if they hadn't never et before. "They ain't nothin' but hollow tubes," complained Sheeby bitterly to Hallie. "It's a wonder to me they don't founder. Five of them eatin' a whole chocolate cake!"

A less justifiable grievance was Mis' Jac'line's unaccountable fondness for that uppity old Simon. Why, she had hardly been in the house three minutes, had barely waited to say howdy to Sheeby and Hallie when, without even waiting to take her hat off, away she went out of the back door and across the yard to the stable as fast as her two legs would carry her. There Sheeby from her window had seen her throw her arms around that dirty old nigger man smellin' of horses and hug him

as ef he had been made of rubies and diamonds. Pretty goings on for a young lady so superior to common folks there weren't nobody in her home town fitten to learn her nothin' and she had to be sent away to the East. And the airs that nigger put on!

This last rankled deeply. For from the beginning Sheeby had been jealous of the privileges accorded Simon, and Simon, who hardly ever noticed the house servants, scorning them as a star fixed in the heavens might scorn a flibberty gibberty comet, was suddenly and deeply jealous of them. That Sheeby had a son somewhere, he knew. That she planned to work the son in first as assistant and then in his place Simon suspected, but quite without any real grounds. These surmises he did not pass on to Jacqueline, but he did fill her full of tales against Sheeby and Hallie, tales of their shiftlessness, extravagance, lack of cleanliness.

"Ef yore ma could have peered in the garbage can and seen whut they throwed away she would have turned in her grave. Ef yore ma had walked in her front door and seen her parlor piled up same as ef it had been snowin' dirt, she would have sent them two flyin' so fast you might have thought they was an express train."

Jacqueline, remembering how Sheeby and Hallie had ignored her in applying for the place, was only too ready to believe Simon's complaints. Now recalling her mother's careful pride in her housekeeping, she felt a new responsibility. She was polite but firm with Hallie about the sweeping and dusting, she inquired pointedly about the half of a chicken that seemed to have walked by itself out of the ice box, she suggested to Sheeby that she clean

her sink and wash out her dish towels more frequently. "You cannot get the glasses clear with dirty towels," she said wisely, "and I noticed last night at dinner that they were smudgy and streaked."

All this, hard as it was, *might* have been endured for three months if Mr. Burrell had not cut Sheeby to the quick by banishing her almost curtly to the kitchen the moment Jacqueline came home. Mr. Burrell at heart was a formal person and liked things done formally and in order. This applied particularly to anything concerning his womankind, and he had no intention of allowing Jacqueline to become a witness to the familiarities he allowed his cook, innocent though they were. Nor were all of Sheeby's stories and witticisms fit hearing for the ears of a delicate-minded young girl, though Mr. Burrell ought to have been wise enough to realize that Sheeby knew this quite as well as he. The more Sheeby brooded over her apparent lack of favor, which she considered nothing less than a slap in the face, the more bitter and ill used she felt herself, and not, it must be confessed, altogether unjustly. For if Sheeby had begun by devoting herself to Mr. Burrell as a matter of policy, she had ended by feeling for him an attachment as real as the one she simulated. Hence, a black woman scorned being much like a white one, Sheeby made up her mind to "move on."

Mr. Burrell was feeling very lonely and forlorn the evening Sheeby chose to break the news to him. Always, when Jacqueline was away from him, he forgot the many ways in which she distressed or hurt him and remembered only the pleasant things about her—remembered how

beautiful she had been as a baby and how proud he was of her and how she sometimes would not go to sleep until he came and tucked her in; lived over again the day, when staying home for a slight illness, five-year-old Jacqueline had suddenly disappeared and, after they had vainly scoured the whole neighborhood, had suddenly appeared hurrying up the front walk, hatless and breathless, but carrying proudly in her two chubby hands a little pansy plant she had walked all the way to Grove's Greenhouse to buy for "poor Papa" out of her own pennies. The last days before she returned from school Mr. Burrell had hardly been able to sleep at night, so impatient was he to see her, to be with her, to show her off to the neighbors, to have her to brighten and make beautiful his long, lonely evenings.

The first few days had been almost as he had dreamed. Jacqueline had clung to him at the station as if she would never release him, at home she seemed unwilling to let him long out of her sight. She chatted, was gay, companionable, listened to his stories, laughed, stimulated him, drew him out. Then, before he realized what was happening, she became absorbed in a crowd of young people and their unending "goings on." When he came home in the late afternoon, hoping for a drive or stroll with her, she was either absent or had half a dozen giggling girls and as many callow male popinjays cluttering up the front porch or in his library. Evenings were almost as bad. Dinners she usually had alone with him, but that was almost the only time he had her to himself as her breakfasts, on account of the many parties and late hours, she usually had in bed. He had protested more than once

over the late hours, partly on her account, partly on his —he had always been troubled with insomnia and was unable to sleep until he knew Jacqueline was safely home and in bed. Jacqueline was sorry, and insisted that he must not worry about her, that she would take her shoes off at the front door and creep up to bed as softly as a mouse, or if that did not suit, would stay overnight with Sarah Sawyer or at Aunt Sally's. She did not, however, offer to stay home with him or to surrender a single one of her pleasures for his sake. His sisters, when he appealed to them, backed Jacqueline up. "Let the poor child enjoy herself," they said. "She's only doing what every girl of her age does. After studying so hard it's natural she should crave a little pleasure." Jacqueline's aunts, whose daughters had long ago grown up and married, were enjoying vicariously their niece's youthful popularity and conquests. They adored having her run in to see them to tell them about the parties she had been to or was going to, the dresses she had worn, the youthful swains who had squired her there and back.

It was the thought of these latter that particularly embittered and distressed her father. That she should prefer those gawky, tongue-tied, pimply faced youths with their blushings and stammerings, their prominent Adam's apples, their inability to phrase a sensible sentence, to his companionship was as gall and wormwood to Mr. Burrell. When he lay sleepless in bed and heard some time after midnight a suppressed soprano giggle, an answering whispered bass beneath his wide open window, he was so bitterly jealous, so violently enraged, he gladly would have pounded the interloper with his fists. Once he said in the

hearing of several women that he would be grateful when Jacqueline had passed through the marrying age and settled down into an old maid. "Why, John, why, Mr. Burrell, you don't mean you *actually want* Jacqueline to be an old maid," they had chorused, and seemed so shocked and surprised he was amazed. Because he did desire this above all things he was prepared with reasons why Jacqueline should not marry. She was too independent, she would never want to marry, and besides (but this he was more inclined to keep for Jacqueline's consumption) because of her abominable and unfeminine notions about her "rights" no man would live with her for more than six months at the outside. Mr. Burrell convinced himself without much trouble that Jacqueline was the perfect type of the modern non-marrying young woman.

The evening that Sheeby came to him to give notice that she and Hallie were leaving, Jacqueline had kissed her father lightly on his bald spot and abandoned him gayly for a spindly horse faced youth who was, it appeared, a fraternity brother of Wirt Sawyer's at the Kansas University and now making the Sawyers a visit. Mr. Burrell was feeling so lonely and neglected he welcomed Sheeby enthusiastically and invited her to sit down. He thought that she had made some domestic difficulty, such as a faulty stove, an excuse for seeking him out so that she could tell him some late savoury bit of gossip and was quite appalled when she told him she was leaving—all of which Sheeby's shrewd little eyes quickly took in.

"But why, Sheeby? What's the trouble? I thought you and I would grow old together."

Sheeby explained that she was getting on in years,

the work had become too hard for her, and that she could not be forever baking cakes and washing dishes until midnight. Three meals a day were all she had contracted to serve. Moreover, she was used to being told when "company" was expected. Sheeby had real cause for complaint, for many times Jacqueline had been both thoughtless and carelessly selfish and every instance Sheeby had at her tongue's end. Mr. Burrell had to raise her wages and promise her everything she asked before she would consent to reconsider her decision and stay on with him.

"Do you mean," said Jacqueline indignantly, "that I have to ask Sheeby's permission before I can invite a single friend to the house for so much as a cup of tea?"

Unfortunately there remained always in the background between Jacqueline and her father a lively host of unforgiven wrongs and grievances ready to marshal themselves and spring forward at the slightest hurt or misunderstanding. Now Jacqueline's resentful tone irritated Mr. Burrell unreasonably.

"I never seem able to offer you the slightest advice or criticism," he said loftily, "without your at once assuming a manner and way of speaking that is particularly offensive to me. However, in this matter that concerns me so closely I do not intend to argue with you but merely to tell you what you are and are not to do."

"But, Father . . ."

"Just a minute until I have finished what I have to say. Sheeby and Hallie have been with me for more than a year and until you came home I never had the slightest trouble with either one of them. I never found

them unreasonable in any way. I must insist that during the few months you are home you conform to the manner of living that seems best and wisest to me. Sheeby seems to object particularly to your afternoon tea habit and the extra baking and dishwashing it entails. I cannot but agree with her that this custom of eating rich cakes and indigestible sandwiches in the middle of the afternoon is not a good one. My opinion has never carried any weight with you, but at any rate Sheeby and Hallie will leave if you persist in inviting in your friends for meals at all hours and particularly for afternoon tea, and that I cannot and will not allow."

"In other words, I am to spend my summer trying to please your darkey servants instead of their trying to please me. I am glad you told me. At least I know now where I stand."

She was out of the room without waiting for an answer, more hurt and angry than she had been since her last quarrel with her father. The pity of it was that if Mr. Burrell had been a little more tactful, if he had put the situation up to her as man to man and asked her to help him solve it, she probably would have been pleased instead of hurt, and able to see herself where she had been unreasonable. Jacqueline was as familiar with the negroes as she was with whites, and there is small doubt that she could have settled the whole tempest in a teapot without much effort and made friends with Sheeby besides if her father had recognized her position as head of his household and thrown the responsibility on her shoulders. Sheeby no more wished to leave Mr. Burrell than he wished to lose her, and he could readily have assuaged

her hurt feelings without giving in to her so entirely. As it was, Sheeby became overnight cocky and arrogant. She refused point blank to obey Jacqueline's orders when they did not suit her, giving as her excuse that she "hadn't no time."

The worst of it all was not only that it widened the breach between Jacqueline and her father, but that it spoiled her home for her and made her always anxious to get away from the roof under which she was born. She felt unwanted there—in the way. Hadn't her father told her he never had any trouble until she came back? Sheeby she grew to hate frankly. She told herself, dramatizing the situation, that her father had scorned and humiliated her. She grew farther and farther away from him, spent less and less time alone with him. Simon, who usually could be counted on for a measure of common sense, both sympathized and fanned the flame of her self-pity. Both her aunts said it was a shame and condoled unduly with her. Her Cousin Julia unfortunately was away. It was a relief to both Jacqueline and her father when her second cousin Clara Crowell Brown invited her to visit at her cottage at Harbour Beach, Michigan. Jacqueline spent more than half her summer there and in the two weeks she was at home before leaving early in September for college, was frankly a visitor on the wing, never going near the kitchen or acknowledging Sheeby's presence in any way.

CHAPTER XI

JACQUELINE was never again to have an utterly happy homecoming. Her home was never again to her the beloved place of refuge to which her thoughts and affections instinctively turned whenever she was tired or discouraged or unhappy. Once, opening the Sawyer front door, it came to her with a pang that she was more at home there than in the house where she had been born and brought up. The Sawyers made her as welcome as one of themselves. She felt free to drop in there at any time and stay as long as she pleased. Her coming brought no disturbance or friction. "It's the nearest to a home I have," Jacqueline told herself and fought back her tears.

In her father's house she had once felt nearer her mother than any place else. Formerly, when alone there, she had often wandered about the familiar rooms, touching gently the things that had been her mother's, laying her cheek for a moment against a cushion that her mother had made. This comforted her somehow, brought her mother closer. Now she felt, but without putting it into words, that her mother's gentle presence had fled and that the rooms were just empty rooms, stripped of that brooding, sheltering sense that had made them home for her. Sometimes she thought of Simon's description of her grandmother—"laffed out." She herself felt "laffed out," squeezed dry of joy or happiness in the first days follow-

ing each homecoming. She wondered whether the house, which had been built for her grandmother, might not have had a malign influence on its first mistress; whether her grandmother had been forced to stifle both her laughter and tears and teach herself not to feel in order to be able to live in it. This sometimes, in the night, seemed plausible, but other times Jacqueline's common sense made her reject it. It had always been a friendly house, roomy, high ceilinged, five fireplaces downstairs, four on the floor above, wide, long windows everywhere opening on the spacious lawns. No, it was not the dwelling that was to blame—it was the fact that a stranger, an ignorant servant stranger, ruled as its real mistress rather than the daughter of the house.

Feeling so, it was small wonder that Jacqueline dreaded more and more each return, that she spent as many Christmases as possible in the East visiting school friends, escaped to Michigan or Colorado or some place else as often as her father would permit. In the little time she was at home she regarded herself stolidly as a visitor, claimed no authority, interfered with Sheeby not at all. All her entertaining she did at the new Country Club or at the homes of her aunts, ignoring Sheeby's occasional attempts at conciliation, the wonderful meals she prepared as her welcome, the numerous chocolate and caramel cakes she baked—ignored even Hallie's tentative suggestions that she might like to give a party—that she was sure "Ma" wouldn't mind.

What she would do, what her life would be when she had graduated, she put off deciding until the time came. She was happy at college, proved an eager student, was

popular both with the teachers and students. "You are too quick and I fear too superficial ever to make a scholar," her professor in English literature once told her, "but you have a lively intellectual curiosity that will provide you with a rich full life if you let it. Don't, my dear, don't, I beg you, settle down as so many of my girls do and become stodgy and kitchen-minded the minute you are married."

Jacqueline laughed and said she'd not do that. She added that she had no intention of settling down anywhere if she could help it.

"I know, but you come from a small mid-Western town, do you not? And small towns everywhere are so—shall we say inhibiting?"

"I know, but I don't mean to stay put in mine. My father doesn't need me, there isn't a boy or man in the place that I don't know too well ever to fall in love with, and anyway I have a little money from my mother so that some day I can travel and be independent."

"You are one of the lucky ones," said her instructor and sighed. Jacqueline agreed with her. She was feeling particularly happy and pleased with life that Spring of her junior year in college as her father had at last consented that she should spend her summer traveling in Europe with a party of schoolmates and chaperon. This had long been her dream, and as it approached realization she could hardly contain her joy. But sometimes at night she had sudden twinges of conscience and wondered whether she was selfish not to go home. These were not on account of her father—she was convinced that her father was happier without her—but because of

the bad news from Simon. Simon was now well over eighty, and at last had had to succumb to his enemy rheumatism and allow a younger man to take care of his horses and drive his carriage. He had chosen as his successor a grand-nephew of his own named Boley Wilson and ruled him, Mr. Burrell wrote, with an unrelenting rod of iron. Sheeby indeed had justified Simon's suspicions and tried to persuade Mr. Burrell to give the place to her son Jess, but when this was mentioned to Simon he was thrown into such a rage that it brought on a slight stroke of apoplexy and Mr. Burrell, thoroughly contrite, agreed that Simon could have Boley or anything else he wanted. Later, to conciliate the sulking Sheeby, he dismissed his yard and furnace man and hired Jess instead. The intimate details of this fracas Jacqueline had learned from Sarah Sawyer, who had them from Simon. Simon unfortunately could not read or write, so kind little Sarah went regularly to see him and read him Jacqueline's letters and delivered messages back and forth from these two friends and allies. Simon was longing for Jacqueline to come home as he feared he would never see her again, but he did not say so outright,—merely hinted. When he recovered from his stroke and seemed almost himself again Jacqueline determined to go on with her trip. After all, it was a chance of a lifetime going with Miss Henry and Simon would probably live for years and years—he claimed his mother had lived to be over a hundred. To placate her conscience Jacqueline sent him a gorgeous striped-flannel dressing-gown, patterned after those worn by members of a famous Oxford rowing club and Spanish red bedroom slippers. Sarah wrote he was

proud as peacock of the robe but refused to wear it, keeping it to be buried in. "The old silly," said Jacqueline, and wiped her eyes.

Mr. Burrell, coming East to see Jacqueline off, remembered afterwards that never in the busy week they had spent together in New York had he seen his daughter without a hat or the turban-like arrangement she wore evenings but not being given to noticing trifles, he thought nothing about it at the moment and was utterly unprepared for the shock she gave him when she came home for Christmas and he found she had bobbed her hair. He had made all his life such a point of admiring the gentle old-fashioned long haired feminine "worthy" women and had derided so often in Jacqueline's hearing the bold, cigarette-smoking, notoriety-seeking opposites that it seemed a deliberate slap in his face when she cut off her hair. For once he was so hurt that he was rendered speechless and never mentioned the matter to any one then or thereafter, maintaining a dignified standoffishness with his daughter all the time she was home. Jacqueline, grateful to be spared the scene she had schooled herself to meet, thought little more about it. There was the usual round of parties and Christmas entertaining and Jacqueline saw very little of her father. Sheeby was the only one who divined the depth of his hurt.

Mr. Burrell had grown more and more dependent upon Sheeby as the years passed and he had been careful never to allow himself to guess how thoroughly Jacqueline disliked and distrusted her. As long as Jacqueline said nothing, made no complaints, he was too gratefully satisfied to look underneath for trouble and it never occurred

to him that Sheeby was the reason Jacqueline spent so much of her vacation times away from him or that, because of Sheeby, Jacqueline dreaded each return to her home. Mr. Burrell felt that he was an ideal father. He was paying for Jacqueline's heavy school and other expenses himself, never touching a penny of her inheritance from her mother, and certainly there was no girl in New Concord who had enjoyed half the advantages he was giving Jacqueline.

Jacqueline, indeed, was little out of his thoughts. When she was absent he was forever longing for her, forgetting that she ever disturbed him. He boasted about her a good deal to Sheeby and Hallie, and they always agreed enthusiastically with him. But when Jacqueline was home and did something to distress him or when a letter came with a request that he thought unreasonable, Sheeby never let slip a chance to intensify with a word or two his incipient anger. Mr. Burrell never criticized his daughter to Sheeby, but she always knew when he had a grievance against Jacqueline and kept each one alive as long as she could. Sheeby was forever reminding him what a wonderful and generous father he was and had a great deal to say about the ingratitude and unreasonableness of the modern young person, so different from the models of affection and respectful decorum so common in the days of their youth. After Sheeby had seen Mr. Burrell wince when Sarah Sawyer asked him if he didn't just *love* Jacqueline's bob, she managed speedily by some hook or crook to drag in frequent references to shop girls she had seen with hair cut short or would tell some amusing tale of a colored belle or ancient crone who had joined the ranks of the newly

shorn. Sheeby knew that this was dangerous, knew that these remarks both angered and upset Mr. Burrell, but she was upset herself and just naturally could not help it. For the time was getting short now before Jacqueline's schooling would be ended and she coming home for good.

It was already February—then April; now May and finally June. Mr. Burrell, Mis' Millard and Mis' Markam were getting ready to go East and see "her" graduate. They were gone. The first week of their absence flew by—then the second. They were starting home late this afternoon. Day after to-morrow they would be here. Now it was to-day—this very morning. Sheeby heard a sudden commotion and looking out from her window saw Boley speeding up his horses in the driveway and bringing them to an abrupt and spectacular stop under the porte-cochère. Mis' Jac'line at last was home to stay.

CHAPTER XII

To Sheeby's surprise Jacqueline made no move during the following summer either to oust her from her place or claim any authority. Sheeby noted, however, with growing uneasiness, that Jacqueline did not accept any of her invitations to visit out-of-town friends and went instead to Colorado Springs with her father. When she was in New Concord she stayed home more and more in the evenings, reading to Mr. Burrell, wandering about the yard with her arm in his, encouraging him to talk and scarcely ever contradicting him or disagreeing with him, although it was evident to the least discerning that every hair of her head usually was protesting at the things he said.

"She's fairly layin' herself out to git around him," said Sheeby to Hallie.

"Shucks, Ma, you're always huntin' trouble where there ain't none. Mis' Jac'line always treated us right."

"Hump!" said Sheeby, and went on beating up a cake. No use wasting her breath on a fool like Hallie, who, if her mother had not held her by a tight rein, would already have gone over body and soul to the enemy. But no young miss just out of school need think she could pull the wool over Sheeby's eyes. There was never a day, scarcely an hour, when Sheeby did not ask herself bitterly just what "she" was up to.

Yet Jacqueline was not "up to" anything, except to

please her father and make him as happy as possible before she broke the news to him that she had made up her mind during her last year in school that she would never be happy in New Concord. His evident pride and delight in her graduating honors, the lavishness of the diamond bracelet he presented to her, her Aunt Sally's and Cousin Julia's account of the boastful things he said of her, had both touched and softened her. In an emotional sleepless hour in the Pullman she began asking herself if she had not been selfish in leaving her father so much alone during the last five years and whether she might not have been partly to blame in some of their many quarrels and dissensions. Being an honest person, Jacqueline was forced to answer yes to both these questions and her devotion now was an attempt to make amends and give her father a perfect summer to remember before she went away again. That this unexpected harmony, as well as her father's growing fondness for her, irritated and alarmed Sheeby almost to the bursting point Jacqueline was well aware and this did not take away any of her pleasure in the situation.

"Sheeby all but had a fit at the breakfast table this morning because Father brought a rose and laid it on my plate," she told Simon.

Simon let out a short cackle. "Fits! I'd give her fits ef I had my way," he snorted. "I wisht I could have bin there and seed her."

Simon had had another slight stroke and there seemed a cloud or haze over his mind much of the time. He spent most of his days in his cabin, dozing in a rocking chair in the sun or before the fire, but he always bright-

ened up when he heard Jacqueline's voice or footstep. Occasionally, when the weather was just right and he was feeling especially well, he managed to shuffle up to the stable where he inspected the horses, the carriage and phaëton, the harness, the floor, the condition of the bins and made poor Boley as wretched as possible. If he encountered Jess on these trips he pointedly ignored him although good natured Jess had made several efforts to conciliate him. Simon refused point-blank to hold any "traffic" with that she-devil Beersheba Hanley or any of her offspring.

"Do you think we need two strong young men around the place?" asked Jacqueline of her father. "Boley has hardly anything to do and could easily cut the grass and run the furnace."

"Oh, well, you know how Simon is and it won't be for much longer."

"Oh, no, of course we couldn't upset Simon but he'll probably live for years. I meant why not keep Boley and let Jess go. He'll have no trouble finding work."

"Jess is the best worker I ever had on the place. I think I'll keep him on—at least for the present," said Mr. Burrell a trifle uneasily. Jacqueline did not press the matter as she knew her father was too dependent on Sheeby to dare let Jess go.

Jacqueline had never realized until this summer that her father really cared for her—cared for her deeply, that is, as Mr. Sawyer cared for Sarah. This new knowledge gave her a sense of belonging, of being wanted, that pleased and touched her even while it somewhat appalled her. She was happy to feel that her father loved her,

but at the same time she did not want him to love her so much or want her so badly that he would not let go of her. His growing tendency to drop his friends and outside interests, and put her in their stead, alarmed and worried her.

"Why, he'd absorb me body and soul in a few years," Jacqueline told herself. It was all right for one summer, endurable for a few months, but—despite the new pangs his fondness brought her—Jacqueline was more than ever determined to leave New Concord and "live her own life in her own way."

She was prepared for a struggle, for determined opposition and endless arguments, but when the time came she was still not prepared for the bitterness, the depths, of her father's anger. He acted, indeed, as if she had first encouraged him and then dishonorably betrayed him—and to the death.

"But if I were a boy, you would think it perfectly natural that I should want to get away and make something of myself. And you'll *have* to admit that there is *nothing* for me to do in New Concord."

"You're not a boy. If you had been I should have expected you to study law and take over my practice. As the Lord saw fit to make you of the same sex as your mother and grandmother I insist that you follow their examples . . . and do as all decent, self-respecting, worthy women do . . . stay and look after your home."

"You know perfectly well, Father, that I haven't a single thing to do about the house—that any suggestions of mine are resented and only make trouble."

"Your mother had two house servants and she managed

to find plenty to do. You may recall that your mother was also a college graduate, but she never thought herself above looking after her home."

Jacqueline scorned her mother's diploma as coming from something more like a boarding school, but she only smiled, and a maddening smile it was to her father, and said, "Mamma was different. She wasn't very strong for one thing and she had me to look after. Certainly, when I am married and have children I intend to stay home and take care of them. There's nothing to my way of thinking more important than that. But as it is, with Sheeby running the house I haven't a solitary thing to keep me busy."

"Why don't you do church work? Or help with this er . . . Junior League thing Sarah gives so much time to?"

"Father, don't you *realize* that this town is overrun with women and girls who are bored to death because they have so much time on their hands and nothing interesting or constructive to do? Why, they fairly go out of their way to make work for themselves. Sarah sews and sews and makes some silly thing for the Junior League bazaar that costs her four dollars and sells for two. Or she helps get up a party and puts a hundred dollars' worth of energy into making cakes and salads and running around begging contributions so that a lot of well-to-do loafers can come and play cards for fifty cents and eat a dollar's worth of donated food. If every member of the League would give five or ten dollars apiece, they'd save themselves a lot of trouble and have more in the treasury. It's the same . . ."

"I suppose it has never occurred to you that a ma-

jority of the women in this town cannot afford to give sums like ten dollars every time they are asked? It's not every girl who was brought up to have money handed out to her like water. I can see now what a mistake it was in your case. I have worked and slaved all my life just to give you every advantage and now instead of a little natural gratitude, you turn on me as if I had the plague."

"Father dear, I haven't turned on you. Why, I . . ."

"You haven't? I'd like to know what you call it. Not that I expected gratitude—or if I did, I was a fool not to know better. Men or women who expect their children to be of any comfort or service to them in this day and age are out and out fools and I admit it. When I was young it was different. My father and mother made sacrifices for me and gave *me* an expensive education, but they expected something of me in return. I suppose you call that unreasonable . . . idiotic. You've progressed out of my class. I can't deny it."

"Father, I know you don't really mean that."

"I don't? It must be fine to know as much as you do. I cannot remember whether or not they taught you mind reading at your top lofty Eastern school, but if they didn't I'll tell you in words of one syllable that I mean exactly what I say now—and that is that while I have given up all thoughts or hopes of any decent gratitude in you and apologize for ever expecting such a thing, I do expect and shall insist that you abandon your absurd unnatural ideas and conduct yourself like a normal, well bred young girl instead of one of those wild, perverted female Bolsheviks."

"Ye gods," said Jacqueline to herself, "he couldn't possibly carry on any worse if he had caught me putting poison in his coffee."

For a time she kept her temper nobly, and argued and pled. But the more sane and sensible she was, the angrier, the more unreasonable was her father. He was especially vituperative and indignant, and refused point blank, when she asked him to give her money to study social service work in New York.

"It wouldn't take very much. I could live on very little and get a job after a few months. I'm only asking you to give me the income of the money Mamma left me. I know you've done a lot for me and I appreciate it in spite of all you say, but now that I am of age, why shouldn't you allow me some of my own money?"

"You get your mother's money when you are thirty—not a day before—unless you prove to me you have a little sense and decency in your head. As yet I haven't discerned a glimmer."

"But, Father, if I married to-morrow you would turn it over to me and I don't see why . . ."

"Only in case you married suitably and with my full approval. And I assure you that even if I did not go East to school I know something about men and that *any* man with common intelligence or the slightest respect for himself or decent worthy womanhood would snap his fingers at the thought of marrying a girl like you. Your mother must have realized, must have divined . . ."

"You drew up her will, didn't you, and she signed on the dotted line, didn't she?" flared Jacqueline, and could have bitten her tongue out a minute afterwards.

"Father, I'm sorry I said that. It was beastly after all you have done for me. You have been *most* generous and I am truly grateful. Only I don't think you realize fully that I am a grown woman."

It was no use. Her father flung himself out of the room without acknowledging her apology and hardly spoke to her for days. When she did get him to talk it was only to begin once more at the beginning. Jacqueline was in despair.

"I might as well try to argue with a raging hyena," she told herself. "The same insulting remarks, the same old threadbare arguments over and over again about a woman's duty lying in her home, etc., etc." She wondered whether these quaintly archaic bludgeons really had been effective in her grandmother and great-grandmother's day. Certainly they did little execution when turned against a very modern member of the modern generation.

Mr. Burrell fled in his extremity to his sisters and Julia Markam. They consulted together and summoned Jacqueline. She was by this time—as Simon put it—"fightin' mad."

"Jacqueline dear, you don't really *mean* you want to go to work and earn your living?" asked Aunt Sally.

"Why not?" demanded Jacqueline.

"Tell us about it, Jacqueline," said her Cousin Julia. "It's a rather serious undertaking. Tell us your plans and what you want to do. Your father was . . . well, rather incoherent."

"You don't have to repeat any of his remarks. I listen to them eighteen hours on Sundays and six to eight on

week days. A little more of it and I shall go raging mad."

Julia Markam laughed. "Poor lamb," she said, "I don't wonder you look tired. Now tell us all about it."

So Jacqueline went over her arguments once more. There was nothing for her to do in New Concord. Bridge parties day after day bored her to death. She loved her friends and them, she loved New Concord, but she had never been happy in her home since Sheeby came. She loved her father, but they hadn't a single idea in common. Most of their conversation consisted in this laying down the law and expecting her to agree meekly—and she almost never agreed to anything he said or believed. She realized he had been good to her and very generous, but she did not believe that that gave him the power of life and death over her or the right to ruin her youth. Several of her classmates planned to prepare themselves to do social service work in New York and she wanted to join them. She realized that she had no special talents, but she *did not* mean to settle down and stagnate. If her father would give her the income from her mother's estate for one year, she was sure at the end of that period she could take care of herself.

"He'll never give it to you now, Jacqueline," said Cousin Julia. "I think you might just as well accept that fact."

"All right. Then I'll make plans to get a job in New York some way or other. I have a friend there who landed a job in a bank without any trouble."

"But, Jacqueline child," said Aunt Nancy, "what would you *do* in a bank? Count the money?"

"Possibly. Or if they had somebody else to do that I could sweep out and polish the brass rails or empty the spittoons."

"Jacqueline, you don't mean *that*," protested literal-minded Aunt Nancy, and began to cry. "A girl that has been brought up as you have been. When I think of your dear mother . . ."

Jacqueline had to assure her aunt that she had no serious intentions of emptying spittoons before they could resume their conference. She found her father's sisters sympathetic but as adamant as he on the subject of her leaving home and getting a "job." The very word caused them an involuntary shudder. It was so coarse and crude —not at all lady-like.

"But I'm not a lady, thank God!" cried Jacqueline and threw up her arms.

"Why, child, why, Jacqueline, what a thing to say!" protested her two aunts.

"Don't let Cousin John hear you say that," counseled Mrs. Markam. "I fear he already has a slight suspicion to that effect and if you confirm it, you will break his heart."

"Cousin Julia, do you think it's such a shocking, unholy, God-awful thing for me to want to make some use of my education and what brain I have instead of settling down and twiddling my thumbs?"

"No, dear, I don't. I rather expected something of the kind. But I think you underestimate the practical difficulties."

They discussed these difficulties at some length, Mrs. Markam insisting that a year spent in studying typewrit-

ing, short-hand and the keeping of books would be a wise move on the part of a young person about to set forth alone and unaided to tackle the business world. There was a very good commercial college in New Concord.

"But there's no *need* for Jacqueline to study those tiresome things," protested Aunt Sally. "Naturally she will marry when the time comes and in the meantime she ought to enjoy herself like any other young girl."

"I'll never marry if I stay in New Concord, Aunt Sally. I suppose Mr. B. Shaw would say that the real cause for my wanting to get away was my natural sex urge driving me to go out and get me a man."

Jacqueline's two aunts had never approved of young ladies being deliberately unfitted for matrimony by being sent to college. (When they were young such were the views of "nice" people generally, but these two ladies were broad-minded enough to admit that such institutions might be necessary for teachers and other unfortunately plain members of the fair sex who had to earn their living and could never hope to marry.) Moreover, it had long rankled that their brother had been guided by Julia Markam rather than themselves in his choice of his daughter's school. Now their worst suspicions were confirmed of what college did to sweet pure young girls and they exchanged meaning glances. No wonder that Jacqueline had come back with ridiculous blue stocking notions about going to work! No wonder she said such shocking things! Mrs. Millard had held her tongue a long time, but she could hold it no longer.

"*You* are responsible, Julia, for Jacqueline going to

college instead of the convent or a finishing school," she said warmly. "I hope you are satisfied with the results, but I am frank to say that I, for one, am not. Your Cousin Nancy and I may not have known much about logarithms or things like that when we returned from the convent, but at least we were content and happy to stay home where we belonged and knew better than to talk about sex and urges and other vulgar, unmentionable subjects."

"I quite agree," said her sister.

"Is sex vulgar, Aunt Sally?"

"I'm willing to assume all responsibility," said Mrs. Markam quickly, "although I must admit that Jacqueline says outrageous things. But I am not so sure that making a mystery of certain normal things is not a sure way to make young people think too much about them. But let's don't get on that subject. We're here to help Jacqueline decide what is best for her."

Mrs. Millard, having had her say, was willing to return to the business in hand. Aunt Sally was not a brilliant woman, but she was reasonably shrewd and, having raised three girls, knew how to get around them. She began on Jacqueline now by talking tenderly of her mother, wishing that she could have been spared them, wondering what dear Emily would have thought of Jacqueline's plan to leave her father alone. Aunt Nancy, quickly taking her cue, chimed in with a moving account of "Brother John's" loneliness while his little girl was away, told of his pride in her letters and good looks and achievements in school, dwelt at length on his joy and eager impatience over each of her homecomings.

Between the two Jacqueline, already over excited and emotional, was soon reduced to tears. Aunt Nancy and Aunt Sally were agreed that more than half of their niece's "urge" to leave home was caused by Sheeby's scheming and plotting and were not only prepared but anxious to tell her father so. Sheeby had welcomed rather cavalierly their unsolicited but quite unselfish attempts to help their brother regulate his menage and they quite humanly resented a servant having more influence with Mr. Burrell than they had themselves. Now, they both assured Jacqueline, they would do everything in their power to help her get rid of that "horrid, arrogant old darkey."

"But do you think that would be altogether wise?" asked Julia Markam, who had sat silent during these perorations.

"But why not? Surely you do not approve of the way Sheeby has schemed and maneuvered to undermine Jacqueline and get John under her thumb?"

"I agree that Sheeby is a schemer and has a mean jealous streak, but she has her good points. The only reason she has any influence whatever over Cousin John is because she makes him so supremely comfortable. Nobody, even if you had a housekeeper made to order, could take better care of Cousin John or look out for him more devotedly."

"She may make him comfortable, but she always manages to look out for her own interests."

"Perhaps she does—that's natural. At least she is colored and Cousin John can't marry her when he gets in his dotage. But leaving out that side of it, suppose

you all combine and get rid of Sheeby—don't you see the position that leaves Jacqueline in?"

"It leaves her at the head of her father's house where she belongs," said Aunt Nancy triumphantly.

"Exactly—and her father anchored around her neck the rest of her life. Of course, if Jacqueline is willing to settle down here in New Concord and take on that responsibility, go ahead and get rid of Sheeby. But unless my hearing is defective she has been telling us all afternoon that she particularly desires not to do that very thing."

Jacqueline wiped her eyes and sat up straight in the chair wherein she had hunched herself. "Cousin Julia, *you* don't think I am utterly selfish and hard-hearted?"

"Of course not. You have a perfect right to decide what sort of life is going to make you happiest. But I *do* think you must take into account that your father is old and has had very little of you the last five years."

"But what do you think I ought to do?"

"I think you owe your father your companionship for a year or two before you start out for yourself. You are young and a little waiting won't hurt you. Perhaps Cousin John will soften after a little and become more reasonable, but if he doesn't—and I wouldn't count on it—you will have had time to prepare to take care of yourself—as you certainly are not now prepared."

It was settled that Jacqueline should stay with her father for the next two years and enroll as a student at the New Concord Business College. Jacqueline gave her promise not unwillingly as soon as she was con-

vinced that it was not only the wise but the fair thing to do.

"But of course we won't expect you to stay home two years if your fairy prince comes along and wants to carry you off," said Aunt Nancy, kissing tenderly Jacqueline's hot cheek.

Jacqueline smiled wanly, but she was not interested then in any fairy prince. She was thinking, instead, how terribly long two years were. Twenty-four months, a hundred and four weeks, twice three hundred and sixty days! Why, she'd be twenty-four by that time—only one year away from spinsterhood. Well, she'd given her word—she'd stick it out. She was perfectly aware that her aunts expected her to change her mind before the time came for her to leave home, but she knew she would not. In spite of Hell and high water she meant at the end of two years to claim her right to freedom.

CHAPTER XIII

THE next year passed not unpleasantly. Mr. Burrell, after sulking a few weeks, restored Jacqueline to favor and did not make any particular objection to her studying at business college. New Concord generally accepted this as an amiable eccentricity on Jacqueline's part. It could not hurt her and if it amused her, why not? Besides the work at the school, Jacqueline was stimulated and entertained in studying and making friends with her new classmates. They were nearly all just out of high school and much younger than she. She found them as a whole slangy, cocksure, appallingly ignorant but, after they got over their suspicion that she might try to patronize them, good natured, companionable and often very amusing.

Besides her work at school Jacqueline, for all her scorn of parties, found herself going to a good many and usually enjoying them as much as any one else. At home she and Sheeby observed an armed neutrality and Hallie and Jess and Boley vied in winning her favor. Her father had given her a car—a blue roadster which she ran herself and which Boley as a favor occasionally let Jess clean. Simon was about the same, having various ups and downs but apparently holding his own. Only one thing of any special moment happened during the entire year and Jacqueline was not to realize at the time its significance.

One day just before Thanksgiving, when she was visiting Simon, he sent his wife Stella out of the cottage on an errand. This was not unusual, as Simon had never allowed any of his three wives to become intimate with the Burrell family and when Jacqueline came to see him usually ordered Stella out of the way. On this occasion he seated himself by the window so that he could watch the path that led to his door.

"Baby," he said wheedlingly to Jacqueline, "I've bin steddyin' over something you ast me a long whiles back erbout yore grandma. You ast me whether I recollicted ennybody back home in Virginey answerin' to the name of Martin."

"Yes, I remember perfectly. I asked you about fifty times and you always pretended you didn't know a thing about him."

"Well, I've had a heap of time latterly to think over old times and it's come back to me that I do kind of recollict a young gentleman of that name. I think he were a neighbor of our'n."

"Well, who was he?"

"I don't seem to recall much erbout him 'ceptin' his name," answered Simon cautiously, "but I bin questionin' jest how you come to ast me that?"

"If you tell me all you know about him, I'll tell you all I know," bargained Jacqueline. Simon considered this a long time before he spoke.

"I'm gettin' on, gettin' on," he said at last, "and my memory ain't as much use to me as it were. But now that I've recollicted the name I'll tell you all I kin."

Jacqueline, her curiosity once more aroused, bound

Simon to secrecy and then told him of her discovery in the lining of her grandmother's trunk of the love letter signed Martin. "And that's why I knew Grandmother had once had a lover named Martin somebody or other. And I knew you knew who he was because this Martin said he was sending the note by you."

"Mebbe 'tweren't yore grandma's letter. Mebbe 'twere writ to some other young lady."

"It was Grandmother's all right. Martin called her his darling Laura?"

"Well, yore great-grandpappy Digges were an awful strict man with his girls, 'specially with yore grandma, who were the youngest and pertest. I carried a sight of notes back and forth for her when she were erbout sixteen or seventeen. She were a great one for favorin' first this young gentleman and then that. I can't recollict the half of them."

"But this Martin must have been a very special one for I am sure Grandmother was engaged to him."

"She might have bin. I can't rightly say."

"Well, why didn't she marry him? What happened? I never did believe she was much in love with Grandfather."

"Honey, you're astin' me erbout something that happened long before yore own pappy was born. Yore grandma couldn't marry all the young gentlemen that hung eround tryin' to court her. She were awful high sperrited and it didn't take much to make her send one er t'other of them skittin'."

"But what was this Martin's last name?"

"I don't seem to recall. It might have bin Cunning-

ham . . . there was a young Mars' Cunningham lived down the road from us, but it kind of seems his front name were Richard. It might have been Thom . . . no, there weren't nothin' but girls in old Mis' Thom's family."

Try as she would Jacqueline could get no more out of Simon and she left in a huff feeling she had been tricked. But from the doorway Simon called her back and asked her, with apparent carelessness, her plans for the next day.

"Oh, Sarah and I are going to drive up to Saint Joe and do some shopping if the weather's good."

It was clear next morning, though very cold, and Jacqueline and Sarah had their drive. When Jacqueline returned home about four in the afternoon she found Hallie and Sheeby in a great state. Simon had been at the house, they told her—Simon who was as afraid of the cold as he was of dying and never poked his head outside his cottage from fall to summer. He had had Boley help him as far as the attic stairs where he had left Boley on guard and gone on alone. There Sheeby and Hallie had distinctly heard him rummaging about in the trunk room.

"What bus'ness is it of his'n, pokin' his dirty old nose in the family trunks?" asked Sheeby indignantly.

"Simon isn't dirty, and I'm sure he must have had a good reason," said Jacqueline haughtily, and flew to the attic. It was as she suspected. Her grandmother's little old trunk was pulled out from the wall and the lining of its rounded top ripped all the way across the bottom. The contents of the trunk were tumbled care-

lessly about and the little faded love letter was gone. There had been only the one note there, for Jacqueline herself had long ago explored the hiding place carefully, wondering if there had once been others and this one overlooked at the final clearing out.

She went immediately to see Simon and found him in bed but his mind apparently perfectly clear. Jacqueline had expected to see him cocky and triumphant at the trick he had played on her, but to her surprise he appeared listless and depressed. Jacqueline gathered some way the impression that his expedition to the attic had been a failure.

"Simon, what were you after in the attic?" she demanded.

"Oh, nothin' much," he said. "It jest come to me that yore grandma wouldn't be pleased to have her private letters layin' round where them there she devils could git holt of them. There ain't nothin' safe from them two."

"You might have said so to me and *I* could have burned the note. I suppose you have already burned it?"

"I figgered ef I burned it myself I'd know it 'twere done."

"Simon, you can't fool me. You went after something beside that note and you didn't find it. You're nothing but an old fraud. You promised you would tell me all you knew about Martin and you never told me a thing."

"I told you I'd tell you all I could and I done so."

"All you could? Simon, you mean there *is* something you can't tell me? Something you promised not to tell?"

"I ain't sayin'."

"Was it Grandmother you promised? I *know* it was Grandmother."

"Ef you know so much there's no need to come pesterin' me."

"I've always felt there was some mystery about Grandmother. I'm sure that something happened to hurt her so terribly she never got over it. You know what it was. Why won't you tell me? You must know I'll never breathe it."

Simon lay quiet for a long three or four minutes and Jacqueline, watching him anxiously, realized for the first time how thin and shrunken he had grown. She put her slender white hand over his gnarled black one. "Simon dear, don't you trust me? We've been such friends all these years. You've been closer to me than any one except Mamma ever since I was born. You know I've never repeated a single secret you told me not to and I'd never never tell this one."

Simon turned his head laboriously and regarded Jacqueline with a look she could not fathom. "I ain't got no complaints," he said finally, "but ef I were you I wouldn't go fillin' up my haid with no fool notions. Yore grandma were a Virginia lady and Virginia ladies took on awful hard when our side lost the war. I reckon ef ennything made yore grandma onhappy it were that."

"Simon, I thought I could read you pretty well, but I'm not sure now whether to believe you are telling me the truth or trying to pull the wool over my eyes."

"Suit yoreself. 'Tain't botherin' me none."

He closed his eyes and after an interval Jacqueline started to tiptoe from the room. But as she put her hand

on the door knob Simon spoke. "Baby, you ain't aimin' to tell yore pappy or yore Aunt Sally er Nancy 'bout that there letter?"

"I haven't told them all these years."

"I wouldn't. 'Tain't no concern er theirn."

"All right. We'll keep it our secret." Jacqueline thought Simon seemed relieved but was not certain. Simon, when he wished, could still be very cunning.

For several weeks she often wondered just what it was Simon was after when he searched her grandmother's trunk, but she gradually stopped thinking much about it. Later, when finding the answer seemed her only chance for happiness and Simon lay dying with his poor mind almost hopelessly gone, Jacqueline was to reproach herself bitterly and passionately for not questioning Simon further when she had the chance . . . for not keeping at him then until she made him tell her all he knew.

CHAPTER XIV

THE second year at home began much less happily for Jacqueline than the first. She had finished her studies at the business school during the previous winter and although she dabbled at a course at employment management (by correspondence), tried to keep up her French and did more or less desultory serious reading, she found time dragging heavily. For one thing she had been away so much she had grown away from most of her girl friends and found it impossible to go on where she left off with the old friendships. The affection remained, but the mutual interests had lessened sadly. A number of Jacqueline's contemporaries had gone for a brief year or two to various finishing schools, but Jacqueline happened to be the only girl of her crowd or age to go from New Concord to college. Consequently, by the time she returned home she found most of her intimate friends completely absorbed in the serious business of falling in love and getting married—two, indeed, of her crowd were married while Jacqueline was in school. Jacqueline was sympathetically interested in these affairs, especially so in Sarah's, who was planning her wedding the following fall, but she found none of her friends in turn caring in the least for the things that most interested her.

Jacqueline might have made a great many visits with college friends, but she had promised to stay home with

her father for two years and meant to keep her promise literally. Once or twice she had had girls visit her, but her father was now approaching seventy and visitors and the consequent entertaining annoyed and upset him so much that Jacqueline gave that up. Jacqueline was very kind and patient with her father, but he wearied her inexpressibly with his long, elaborate and often repeated stories, his instinctive recoil from every idea that in any way hinted of novelty or freshness. Mr. Burrell, as he had grown older, had lost none of his choleric intensity, none of his fondness for hearing his own voice, none of his desire to dominate over every member of the weaker and inferior sex whose privilege it was to be associated with him. Nor had he ever consented to give Jacqueline an allowance or turned over to her any of the money which her mother had left her. He was generous enough, allowed Jacqueline to run what bills she wished and hardly ever refused her money, but she still had to go to him for every dollar and explain in detail what it was for.

Sunday dinners at the Burrells' were served promptly at one o'clock and afterwards Mr. Burrell was accustomed to taking a nap. It was after a long wearisome over-rich Sunday dinner in late November that Jacqueline, feeling particularly bored and depressed, changed into an old tweed suit and heavy walking shoes, whistled for her dog Mike and started for a walk. Mike was an Airedale, a recent acquisition, given to Jacqueline by her Cousin Henry Markam, the husband of Cousin Julia. Cousin Henry was such a quiet, unobtrusive little gentleman that people who did not know him well were likely to think of him only as his wife's husband . . . if they

bothered to think of him at all. Jacqueline, however, knew him intimately enough to appreciate him, and he often did charming and thoughtful things for her such as giving her this dog, which she loved at first sight, and that at a time when she was feeling unusually lonely and cut off from anything that interested her or buoyed up her drooping spirits.

Jacqueline hesitated at the front gate, undecided whether to turn South towards the town or North toward the open country, but Mike, by his barking, his eager running back and forth, his frantic impatience, told her as plainly as any dog could that paved streets were no place for a walk; and, to please him, Jacqueline followed him northward. Presently, tempted by a lane that began at right angles to the road, Mike led his mistress straight East toward the high bluffs that overhung the Missouri River. The day was a mild one, hazy and hinting of a vanished Indian summer. From some not distant garden or farm came the haunting odor of burning leaves, so familiar a part of New Concord and its environs that Jacqueline, when away from home, always felt a sudden pang of nostalgia when she caught a whiff of leaf smoke. Jacqueline knew that the lane led to an old abandoned orchard and farm, for as a child she had loved to go there and gather the hard shrunken wormy nubbins of apples, play in the old barn, the only building left standing, shout down the well and listen to the murmured answer from the goblins who lived way, way down under the water, but couldn't come out and gobble you up unless you had been a very, very bad little girl.

Jacqueline, thinking of those long vanished childhood

days, thinking of her mother, feeling as old, or older, than the hazy blue hills across the river in Missouri, was startled by the sound of hammering. Mike heard it too and started promptly to give the matter his attention. There were no houses in sight and Mike knew as well as Jacqueline that the sound of the hammering did not belong there, especially on a peaceful Sabbath afternoon that one might have expected to be held sacred for the observance of the decencies, such as chasing rabbits and scaring impudent cocksure little chipmunks into a proper respect for their betters. A railroad ran just below and Jacqueline knew there was some slight chance of tramps climbing the river banks, but she was reassured when she saw that the overgrown cart track that led to the old barn had recently been cleared. Advancing cautiously a few yards, she came on a disreputable battered Ford car loaded with shingles and was no longer afraid. The farm house had been built fronting on the lane, but the barn was placed facing the river, surrounded by huge old apple trees and a tangle of brush and weeds. Mike had already made his investigation and was waiting by the Ford to report that everything was all right and safe for her to go forward. It was a little barn, a low story and a half in height, with a small addition on the further side. Jacqueline saw that the open shed toward the lane had been torn down, a brick chimney and windows added, a porch built across the front and the walls covered with new shingles. On the sloping roof of the porch sat a man busily nailing shingles into place. "Good afternoon," said Jacqueline, and the pounding ceased.

"Why, what the . . . oh, good afternoon. I didn't know there was any one around."

He removed a shabby wide-rimmed army hat pulled low over his eyes and revealed a quantity of reddish blond hair, bright wide-awake blue eyes and a rather squarish face reddened by sun and wind. "Do you mind if I go on working? I only have a few more of these and I'm through."

"Of course not. I did not mean to interrupt."

"You're not interrupting."

Ten minutes later the worker dropped from his perch to Jacqueline's side. "I don't believe you know me," he said and grinned. "I'm Kent Allen—Ed Allen's son."

"Oh, of course . . . but it's been so long. I've been away so much. Why, I haven't seen you for six or seven years or longer."

The Allens lived in a small cottage a block or two from the Burrells. Mr. Ed Allen was a night watchman in a wholesale grocery warehouse and Jacqueline from a little girl had often watched him pass her house in the early evenings going to his lonely vigil carrying a dinner bucket. For years he had been a romantic figure in her eyes and she had thought him extraordinarily brave. Kent Jacqueline had always known slightly as one of the older boys in school. She remembered now that he was a carpenter, for as an apprentice he had helped build the Sawyer garage. But he did not look like a carpenter in his stained khaki-colored woolen breeches, his heavy boots laced to the knee and a flaming flannel shirt of green and black plaid. Jacqueline started to shake

hands, but Kent drew back, holding out his grimy pitch-stained paws in excuse. Jacqueline noticed that the hands were broad and square-shaped with spreading spatulate fingers. She remarked them because she had once visited at the home of a well-known artist, a father of a school friend, who had hands like Kent's.

"Do you know, Jacqueline, where I last saw you?" He stopped and the red in his face deepened. "But I suppose I ought to call you Miss Burrell now that you're grown up."

Jacqueline liked that boyish blush and the sensitiveness that made him too proud to assume an equality unless she was willing to grant it. She liked too his friendly blue eyes and almost homely squarish face, liked the hint of picturesqueness in his costume. Too bad he was only a carpenter.

"Do, Mr. Allen."

They both laughed light heartedly. "Well, where did you see me last?" demanded Jacqueline.

"In New York . . . in the winter of 1919. I met you on Fifth Avenue not far from the Plaza. You were with two or three girls and I spoke to you and you bowed, but I could tell you didn't know me. It was a good thing too for you you didn't. I had just landed the day before from France and you were the first person from home I had seen in almost four years. If you had acted glad to see me I sure would have fallen on your shoulder and cried."

"Were *you* the officer who spoke to me that day? Why, I've wondered a thousand times who it was. I was too busy looking at your squiffy uniform and Sam Browne

belt to take a good look at your face. But I knew I had seen you somewhere. It gave me an awful kick . . . and the girls with me were so thrilled they could hardly bear it. We walked up and down that block for half an hour hoping you would come back though we were overdue for tea at the Plaza and on the verge of starving to death."

"Seeing you made me so homesick I beat it down to the Pennsylvania station and took the first train going West, although I had meant to stay in New York several days."

"But I didn't know you were an *officer*." Jacqueline felt as soon as she said it that her tone conveyed her amazed surprise and that Kent felt it she knew, for his ears reddened.

"I didn't even know you were in the army . . . in fact I hadn't heard anything about you for years," she concluded lamely.

"Yes. I was one of the Temporaries."

"Were you with the Third Division that went from here?"

"No, I was in the Signal Corps. You know, or probably you don't know, that I worked at my trade during the summers and when things got slack in winter I studied wireless telegraphy and shipped on small steamers winters as a wireless operator. I happened to be in the East when we got in the war, so I enlisted there and went over early."

"Weren't you pretty young to do all that?"

"Well, I was, but they didn't know it. I didn't get my shoulder straps until the end of the scrap—barely in

time so I could come home and swagger up Fifth Avenue."

"All dressed up and no place to go?" said Jacqueline.

"Exactly. Though I was lucky to get a detail that kept me in France a year after the most of 'em left."

"Did you like it over there?"

"Did I like it?" asked Kent, "did I like it?" There came a look in his eyes that Jacqueline could not fathom. He turned from her and stood looking hungrily off into the blue distance but Jacqueline was certain he did not see the Missouri bluffs or anything else that she could see. "Yes, I guess I liked it better than I knew," he concluded and sighed.

"But am I keeping you . . . do you want to go on with your work?" asked Jacqueline, suddenly conscience smitten and feeling in the way.

"No, I've practically finished for to-day. Time to knock off and have a Camel."

With a gesture he invited Jacqueline to sit down and after a moment's hesitation she seated herself on the front step of the new porch with Kent beside her. Mike, who had been off doing his duty by the rabbits and squirrels, suddenly reappeared and put a loving head in Jacqueline's lap. Quite naturally and without any hesitation or self-consciousness Kent offered Jacqueline one of his cigarettes. Jacqueline accepted both the cigarette and a light. "My, that's good," she said, and blew the smoke through her nose. There wasn't another man or boy, Jacqueline knew, in New Concord, who would have offered her a smoke as simply as he would have offered one to an-

other man. Women and girls did not smoke openly or with men in New Concord.

"I haven't had one of these since I don't know when," said Jacqueline. "If my father knew I had ever soiled my lips with tobacco, he would explode into a thousand pieces."

If her father had known she was not only smoking but sitting chatting familiarly with Kent Allen, the carpenter son of Ed Allen, the night watchman, he would have done more than explode, as Jacqueline very well knew, but she had been so bored and restless she was glad to grasp at anything that amused her. Jacqueline was no snob. New Concord was not a snobbish town and the social lines were rather loosely drawn, but Jacqueline, although she would have been perfectly friendly with Kent, would never have dreamed of sitting down and smoking a cigarette with him if it had not been for that casual encounter on Fifth Avenue that gave him a natural opportunity to tell her he had been an officer. Why that should have made any difference Jacqueline would not have been able to explain even to herself but it did make the difference that he was now an ex-officer to her rather than a laboring man.

"I never thought . . . I got so used to girls smoking in France, the American girls, I mean."

"Heavens, don't spoil it by apologizing. But please do tell me before I burst with curiosity what you are doing to this old barn."

Kent explained that the old place had been taken up as a claim more than sixty years before by his mother's father and that he had bought it from his mother by the

payment of several years' back taxes, with the idea of fixing the barn over and selling it and making some money.

"You know they do that all the time in the East. Why, in Connecticut they've made over so many barns into houses that the S.P.C.A. is threatening to petition the legislature to stop it and save the horses and cows. But they haven't a chance. New York is full of birds who think that if they go to Connecticut and live in a barn some guy will come along and take them for artists."

Jacqueline laughed. "Do you think you can find a bird in New Concord who will want to live in a barn?"

"I've found one already . . . my kid brother's English teacher in high school. He's a sure New England old maid and all but threw himself off the bridge the other night because he found a hair in his boarding house butter. He's practically agreed to take this as soon as I get it finished."

"How soon will that be?"

"Oh, not before spring. Work has kept up pretty steady this winter and I'm doing this Sundays and holidays. It wouldn't pay me to knock off my regular work and give all my time to it."

Jacqueline proving interested, Kent took her inside and showed her all he had done with the barn, all the improvements he planned.

"Why, it will be a perfect little jewel of a house when you get it finished," Jacqueline said enthusiastically. "It's too nice for an old maid man."

Kent explained that he hoped to have the shutters from the mill fitted into place by the end of the follow-

ing Sunday and would start painting the outside the Sunday after that if the weather was good. Then he could take all winter to finishing the inside.

"Oh, I love to paint," said Jacqueline. "May Mike and I come some time and help you?"

Kent agreed that she might help him paint his house if she wanted to. That he never expected her to come back Jacqueline saw. "Perhaps you don't want me to . . . of course I'll be in the way."

"No, you won't be in the way . . . only house painting hardly seems just the thing for a girl like you."

"You don't know at all what I'm like," said Jacqueline gayly, as she said good-by. She wasn't sure that she really meant to come back, but she did know that as she walked home she was no longer blue or depressed. The old sense of loneliness that had weighed on her so heavily the past few months had unaccountably fled. She ran races with Mike, whistled and sang, and was never nicer in her life to her father than she was that evening. She did not tell him about her encounter of the afternoon because it never occurred to her to tell him. Jacqueline had learned at an early age that things that seemed to her the most innocent or unimportant or amusing were likely to throw her father into one of his rages, and never took him into her confidence unless circumstances made it necessary.

CHAPTER XV

THE following Sunday Jacqueline was so busy helping Sarah get ready for a supper party for their "crowd" that she hadn't time to think of anything else, but the Sunday after that she wakened early feeling that something pleasant was in store for her. At first she could not recall what it was, but when she heard Mike barking at the kitchen door, remembered that this was the day she had promised Kent Allen to help him with his house painting. She wondered what she had better wear . . . that old green woolen jersey and a matching sweater that the girls in college used to say combined to make her look like a dryad—that would be the very thing. And her blue felt sports hat with the green feather. It wasn't very cold and fortunately the sun was shining.

At half past two that afternoon Jacqueline and Mike opened the front gate and passed through, but this time there was no discussion about their direction. Mike, being a gentleman of discretion, made no comments but headed straight for the river lane, not even bothering to glance back and see whether his mistress was following. However, he knew his duty and waited to find out if Kent was at his post before departing to look after his private affairs.

"Hello," said Kent to Jacqueline, coming down off his ladder. "Hello there, Irish. I see you brought the lady along this time."

"His name isn't Irish . . . it's Mike. Has he been here without me?"

"He was here last Sunday superintending the job. He told me then he thought it was high time I had a helper."

"Well, here I am. Have you got a brush for me?"

Mike, seeing that they had already forgotten him, was off without bothering with adieux. No need to tell *him* that three's a crowd. Jacqueline took off her coat revealing her dryad-like costume, but to her chagrin Kent never noticed it except to say, disapprovingly, that if she wanted to paint she would have to put on an apron, and found a faded denim one for her, such as carpenters sometimes wear. He was using a white stain and setting Jacqueline to work on the front of the house, went off to his ladder at the back. It was all most disappointing. Kent was dressed in white overalls and a white peaked cap and looked exactly like a house painter and not at all like a romantic ex-officer of the A.E.F. Signal Corps. Evidently this painter-carpenter's idea of the way to entertain a young lady of fashion who gave up an entire Sunday afternoon to him was to get as much work out of her as possible. At least he had made it perfectly clear that she was not to interfere with his labor with her idle chatting.

"Serves me right," said Jacqueline under her breath. "Fool, imbecile, idiot!" These epithets were meant for herself alone and she had to admit that the suggestion that she come and help with the painting was hers and not Kent's. Jacqueline could always laugh at herself, fortunately, and she began to laugh now. But not for anything on earth would she let her ungracious and prob-

ably unwilling host guess that she was piqued by his desertion or by his failure to appreciate the honor she had done him. She fell busily to work determined to surprise him by the amount she had accomplished. She surprised him all right for when he appeared at the end of an hour and a half he looked at her amazed. "My God," he exclaimed, "what *have* you been doing?"

"Why, painting of course. I did it just the way you told me to. Isn't it all right?"

Kent laughed. "Did I tell you to paint yourself as well as the wall? Wait a minute till I get some turpentine and I'll clean you up."

Meekly Jacqueline submitted to Kent's ministrations. Not only was her borrowed apron covered with stain, but she had managed to smear it on her shoes, her dress, her hat, her face and hands and hair. "Now," commanded Kent, when he had finished with the turpentine, "run around the house a few times and let that evaporate. Then come inside and warm up. You must be almost frozen."

"I am pretty cold—now that the sun has gone down."

Jacqueline was not famous for taking orders submissively, but she whistled for Mike and raced to the lane and back several times. When she returned to the front porch she found Kent waiting there with his overalls removed and dressed as he had been two weeks earlier. It was not yet five o'clock, but already the night had begun to steal up from the river's bank and a little timid new moon hung in the East as if half sorry for the daring that had made it climb so far, far up into the sky. It was cold and very still. Across the river a train that

must have been going fifty miles an hour seemed to creep leisurely along its track, emitting now and then a thin ghost-like whistle, and followed by a pale wraith of gray smoke. Just below them the great "Smoky River," already almost black, began its magnificent twenty-mile bend. "Doesn't it take your breath away?" asked Kent softly.

"Doesn't what take your breath away?"

"All of it . . . the beauty, the mystery . . . the smell of the earth going to sleep." He stopped abruptly. "But come inside. I've got a fire going."

There was a fire of logs blazing on the brand new hearth and Kent folded his coat and made a seat for Jacqueline on a box not too near the flames.

"I'm afraid you've been bored to death," he said apologetically, "and will never come again, but house painters have to work when the weather lets them. If next Saturday's good, I'm going to take the whole day off and try to get the second coat on. Think I'll get a painter friend of mine to help me in the afternoon."

"Then you won't have any work for me next Sunday?"

"I might leave the window sills for you . . . that's a nice lady-like job. But I imagine you've had enough of it already?"

"If I'm not in the way and you invite me politely, I'd be glad to come back and paint the window sills. It's fun doing things with one's hands . . . and anyway I like to finish things I begin."

"You're not in the way and you're invited to come every Sunday until the house is finished—about next April."

"Oh, I didn't mean till the house was finished. I meant the painting."

"Well, anyway, you're invited. You don't have to come."

They laughed. Jacqueline found Kent easy to laugh with, easy to talk to. Sitting on the floor at her feet, smoking lazily cigarette after cigarette, he told her a wild tale that made her laugh till she cried, of a monkey he had brought back from a cruise to South America; it got away from him in the Grand Central station and was chased for half an hour by all the porters, forty or fifty shrieking small boys and two or three hundred homeward-bound commuters, before it was finally run to earth on the top of the information kiosk in the center of the main waiting room.

Later they found that they were hungry and divided a small piece of chocolate into three parts, since Mike, who had been sleeping by the fire, woke up at the critical moment and demanded his share. Jacqueline was lighting her fifth cigarette when she heard the Saint Benedict's church bell ringing and realized to her amazement that it was six o'clock. She jumped to her feet and hurried homeward, refusing Kent's offer to drive her there in the Ford, giving as her excuse that she needed the walk. She knew her father would think she had gone to Sarah's or to some other girl's, but he sometimes strolled as far as the gate looking for her and she had no intention of being caught driving up with Kent in his rattle-bang car. Kent did not urge her, but before Jacqueline left she had promised definitely to come back next Sunday provided the weather was good.

During the week it rained but cleared by Thursday and was fine over the week-end. Jacqueline on Saturday morning did a good deal of mysterious shopping, bringing home several bundles which she left locked in the back end of her car. On Sunday she and Mike started for their walk by way of the barn and left there weighted down soon after Boley had departed for the afternoon.

"Have you brought some working clothes?" asked Kent quickly when she appeared with her packages. The second coat was on and the little house fairly dazzled with its whiteness. Kent was messing about in a can with something intensely green and to Jacqueline's surprise he seemed disappointed rather than glad to see her.

"No, I'll have to borrow your apron again. Can I put these inside for a while? And is the water in the well fit for drinking?"

Kent nodded, told her he had been drinking the water all fall and that her apron was on a nail by the fireplace. Jacqueline found hanging there a long soft green smock or coverall such as artists are supposed to wear and on another nail a tam-o'-shanter of flaming crimson. "Are these for me?" she demanded, bringing them out to Kent. He regarded her anxiously.

"Well, I couldn't let you ruin your clothes helping me."

Jacqueline put the smock on, buttoned it up, and inspected the tam-o'-shanter critically. "You're a brave man, don't you think? to buy a woman a hat sight unseen. Do you intend to buy your wife's hats after you are married?"

Kent flushed. "Throw it away if you don't like it. I thought it would keep the paint out of your hair."

"But I do like it. Only I don't think you realize what a serious matter a hat is. I usually try on millions before I buy one. If this is becoming, it will be something in the nature of a miracle." She put it on. "There! How does it look? Frightful?"

Kent came close to her, gave the tam a pat and a pull, stood off and regarded her critically. "I knew it would be all right," he said seriously. "It looks . . . just as I thought it would."

"You're entirely too clever," said Jacqueline. "You couldn't possibly know it would be becoming. Probably you are just saying it to save your face . . . and my feelings."

"No," said Kent. "I knew you ought to wear bright colors just as I knew my house here ought to have a white dress. She has such good lines that she can stand being made conspicuous. If she'd had bad lines, I would have stained her a neutral shade so that she could fade away into the landscape and not be noticed. You're like the house . . . you can stand being looked at."

"Are my lines good?" giggled Jacqueline.

"They're perfect," answered Kent. "And line is everything."

"You're very good at paying compliments. I suppose I ought to make a bow. But you know you talk just like an architect."

"I am an architect," answered this surprising young man.

"What?" cried Jacqueline, but before Kent could answer Mike made a dash for a squirrel and knocked over a gallon can of green paint. "Hell's bells!" roared Kent,

making a dive for the can and rescuing it before more than a pint had been spilled. "Excuse my French," he apologized, "but this is Mitis green and costs eight dollars a gallon." He scooped it up painstakingly with a bit of shingle. "There, I've got nearly all of it. Now if you want to go to work, here's a small can and brush and you can start on this window. And here's a rag to wipe the paint off the glass or the white wall. Wipe it off immediately if you spill it, for if it runs there'll be an awful smear."

Obediently Jacqueline set to work and painted hard until she noticed by the chill in the air that the sun had begun to go down. "I'm getting cold. I'm going inside and start the fire," she explained to Kent who was on his ladder painting the last upstairs window.

"Do you want me to help you?"

"No, I'm the original fire builder. Finish up your window."

When Kent opened the door a half hour later he found not only the fire going but a shining brand new tea kettle steaming on an improvised hob. In front of the fire had been drawn two boxes and before each box lay a bamboo porch mat. Between the two seats was another low box and on this had been placed a clean white napkin, a brown teapot, two cups, sugar, a lemon, butter, knives and spoons, jam, bread and a jar of bloater paste. "Tea is ready," said Jacqueline, while Mike leaped up and wagged his tail and assured Kent that they had been waiting for him before beginning their party, but that now that he was here everything was as right as could be in this best of all possible worlds.

Jacqueline made Kent sit down on a mat with his back to a box, but she allowed him to toast the bread which she buttered while it was piping hot. They ate and ate and ate, both vowing they had never tasted anything better. Afterwards they stretched out lazily with their feet to the fire, smoking too many cigarettes, Kent on one side of Jacqueline, Mike on the other, lending his moral support and pretending to be asleep like the tactful gentleman he was.

"Kent," asked Jacqueline, "were you joking or are you really an architect?"

"Well, I'm hardly full-fledged as yet, but I was graduated last summer from the school of architecture at Columbia University. I took the four years' course in less than three and, believe me, I worked like a dog."

"Why, how splendid! But if you've had that training why do you go on working as a carpenter?"

"Because I haven't finished and I don't know any white-collared job that would pay me half the money. Carpenters are paid only seven dollars a day in this metropolis, but in the East they pull down their fifty a week and Mr. Schaefer promised me fifty if I'd stay on here and work for him as a sort of carpenter foreman."

"What do you mean, haven't finished?"

"Well, I got a notion in my fool head I wanted to go back to France next summer and make a try at getting into the Beaux Arts."

"Why, Kent, how perfectly gorgeous! I'm thrilled to the core. But what will you do after you are graduated from the Beaux Arts?"

"Try to get into the office of a first-class firm of architects in New York. But that at present is the least of my worries. It's worrying about breaking into the Beaux Arts that's making an old man of me."

"Do you speak French . . . fluent French?"

"Yes, I learned the lingo well enough over there and I've been studying it ever since, but that's only the half of it." Kent explained that the semi-annual admission examinations to the Beaux Arts were more in the nature of competitions than examinations since there were generally in the neighborhood of six hundred Frenchmen and a hundred and twenty-five foreigners taking the tests and only forty-five Frenchmen and fifteen foreigners admitted. "And each of the fifteen foreigners has to average as high as the forty-fifth Frenchman or the government won't let him in," concluded Kent, "so naturally I have plenty to worry about."

"But you must expect to pass."

"I hope to," said Kent, soberly. "I've had a lot of fine coaching from one of my professors who was graduated over there. He thinks I can make it the second try if not the first. Very few men get in the first attempt and I may have to put in a few months working at one of the preparatory ateliers. I've heard of men who tried as often as nineteen times, but I haven't any time to waste and have to make it this year or never. If I don't, there are some A no. 1 men who teach in Paris and I can put in a year or two to great advantage working in their ateliers and go on down to Rome later if my money holds out. This might be as valuable to me in the long

run, but it would never give me quite the prestige of the Beaux Arts. And anyway, I'll never be altogether satisfied until I've had a try at it."

"Oh, Kent. I think you're marvelous!"

Fired by Jacqueline's genuine praise and enthusiasm and her eager sympathetic questions, Kent found himself talking as he had never talked to any one in his life. He told Jacqueline how he had gone overseas, as much in search of excitement as for patriotic reasons—green, crude, callow, unawakened. And then when the war was over and he was left there for another year, how the age-old beauty and finished charm of France had suddenly taken hold of him and torn the very heart out of him, until he was like nothing so much as a boy with his first love; and felt that he would rather die than live away from the mistress who had not only made him happier than he had ever been, but taught him all the richness life held in store for those who had eyes to see and the will to seek.

Then he told of coming home, heavy hearted, rebellious, and how the strange, jumbled, stupendous, unfinished beauty and ugliness of New York had laid a new charm on him and he had made up his mind overnight that what he wanted with all his heart and mind and soul and will was to be an architect and one of those builders who dared to stand on his own feet and had the faith to work out a new beauty and a new form, instead of copying over and over what some other man had dreamed two, three or five hundred years earlier.

"And if it takes me ten years—twenty—I'm going to do it, build something worth while, I mean, but I've got

to find out first what the old boys did over in Europe. That's what you call getting a background, isn't it? When I get my background I'm going to it."

"It must be wonderful to have something you care for as much as that. I can't tell you how much I envy you."

Kent turned and looked at Jacqueline and there was something in his eyes that made her drop hers. "Yes . . . perhaps. But don't you think," he asked hesitatingly, "that some day . . . there may be something else I might care a great deal more for . . . just like any other man?"

"What, for instance?"

"Well . . . a woman."

"I wonder. No, I don't think so, Kent. I believe you've been given something that most of us don't get . . . and I suppose you'll have to pay for it. I mean you might care a lot for some woman, but if you gave her up, it wouldn't matter half so much to you in the long run as if you gave up your career. I imagine your desire to build . . . and create will be the main driving power in your life and not love or a woman."

"I'm not so sure. A man . . . well, it hardly seems worth very much to go on working indefinitely . . . just for myself."

"Perhaps you'll love a great many women. Most artists do."

"I'm a builder, not an artist. I don't want a lot of women. I want just one . . . and when I find my girl I'll go on working for her . . . whether she cares for me or not."

"That's a beautiful dream, Kent. When you find her

I hope she deserves it. But, Heavens, it's getting late. I must fly."

Walking home Jacqueline told herself it would be wiser if she spent her Sunday afternoons somewhere else . . . kinder. She had seen before the look in men's eyes that she had seen that afternoon in Kent's and knew what it meant. He was too fine and sincere for her to hurt him. He had told her the Sunday before he hadn't seen much of girls like her and of course he hadn't. Jacqueline had no scruples against flirting as a general thing, but in this case it hardly seemed fair or decent. When she thought of his boyish ideal—to find his girl and work for her whether she cared or not—quick tears came to her eyes. What a nice boy he was!

The next Sunday it rained—fairly poured. That was Christmas week and in the mail Christmas Eve Jacqueline found a little water color of herself in the green smock and crimson tam-o'-shanter, idealized, but so exquisitely drawn and colored that even to her inexperienced eyes it seemed admirably done, although she hardly appreciated the real talent behind it. It pleased her more than any of her other gifts, even though she could not show it, and it seemed only common decency to thank Kent for it in person. So, in spite of all her good resolutions, she went back to the little cottage and having returned once, went again and again, helping Kent when she could, or, when he hammered or planed or sawed and there was nothing for her to do, wandering about the woods with Mike until it was time to prepare the tea. Jacqueline, for all her desire to go out in the world and earn her own living, was naturally domestic

and loved to cook and fuss around a kitchen. Since Sheeby's rule forbade this at home she found a special joy in preparing these Sunday feasts for Kent—found even a pleasure in washing up, with Kent's help, and putting away the dishes and supplies in the just-finished and perfectly adorable corner cupboard. Jacqueline had excused herself for going back by determining that there should be no flirting with Kent, that she would keep their relationship on a strictly Platonic basis and flee at the first sign of anything warmer. She succeeded with unflattering ease, for although Kent talked a great deal about himself he never again veered toward the sentimental and Jacqueline often mocked and laughed at herself for imagining that look in his eyes.

That this romantic friendliness (romantic because concealed), the intimacy of the meals before the hearth fire, Kent's tales of his months at sea, of the foreign ports he had visited or of his experiences in France might be dangerous to her own peace of mind, never occurred to Jacqueline any more than it occurred to her that his gift for giving a humorous twist to almost every adventure was dangerous . . . or his quick sensitiveness and ready responsiveness the most dangerous of all. For Kent did not do all the talking. Jacqueline had been even lonelier than she realized and here at last was some one fresh out of an Eastern college who talked her own language, was interested in her ideas . . . even her absurd ideas . . . sympathized with her desire for independence, had an outlook unbounded by New Concord's somewhat limited horizon. So they talked and talked and talked. Nearly always they were gay, laughed a great deal, made

fun of themselves and each other. Never except by accident had Kent so much as touched Jacqueline's hand. That their meetings would some day be discovered and cause a rumpus and much talk Jacqueline knew very well but she did not care enough to give them up.

Both Jacqueline and Kent were happily unaware that they already had been discovered by two small darkey boys out nutting who had seen their light from the woods and crept near enough to recognize the two sitting close together in the leaping firelight, smoking cigarettes and drinking a mysterious something out of a cup.

CHAPTER XVI

SHORTLY before Christmas there had come into Jacqueline's life a new interest in the shape of a young nose and throat specialist. His name was Albert Reed Whittemore and he was the son of a prominent physician of Des Moines, Iowa, who had seen to it that his boy had had every educational and medical advantage, including two degrees from Harvard, eighteen months in a clinic in Rochester, followed by a year in France and Vienna, thereafter sending him to his own old friend, Dr. McGraw of New Concord, for a few years of experience before settling down in Des Moines.

Eligible young men had always been rare in New Concord and Dr. Whittemore was not only eminently eligible but extremely good looking—tall, slim, dark, with a small foreign-looking mustache—and danced divinely, sang, played a first class game of bridge and dressed so beautifully he made all the men in town feel as if they had bought their clothes at the ten cent store. The women made such a fuss over this young newcomer that naturally the other men were jealous and delighted in making fun of him, especially of his flawless Harvard accent, claiming that he dropped his Rs and broadened his As in his sleep. But the doctors did not ridicule him and after he had performed an operation or two treated him with a good deal of respect. He proved so good-natured that even those who had gibed at him ended by liking him. For the rest, he fancied himself a wit and indulged largely

a natural facetiousness, which hardly seemed appropriate in a doctor, but made him popular with the nurses and most of his patients. He was so well advertised by his admirers, the women, that he acquired patients and a respectable practice almost miraculously soon.

Dr. Whittemore was no fool and until he was well acquainted played no favorites in New Concord, but once he was accepted and his popularity assured he came definitely out into the open and announced himself a suitor for the hand of Miss Jacqueline Burrell. "Is my girl going to be there?" he would inquire blandly before accepting an invitation. "And may I sit next to her, kind hostess?" No one was much surprised. It was just Jacqueline's usual luck. With her striking good looks, her lovely clothes and her father's money, it was perfectly natural that Dr. Whittemore should choose her. That Jacqueline would marry him no one doubted, but the town buzzed with speculations as to whether she would select the early summer or fall for her wedding. Jacqueline laughed off the questions that were put to her. "Who said I was going to marry him?" she would ask a trifle belligerently.

"Well, every one says so."

"How silly! I barely know the man."

This was hardly a true statement as Dr. Whittemore spent every spare moment in her society that she would permit. Mr. Burrell was furious. "Is that popinjay coming again this evening?" he would inquire at dinner and scarcely eat a bite if Jacqueline said that he was.

Jacqueline had long ago assumed and maintained her

right to have what men callers she wished, just as she persisted in coming and going when she pleased. Mr. Burrell objected to both these assumptions of independence, so "unnatural" in a young girl, but he never quite dared to forbid them. However, he did all in his power to discourage any of Jacqueline's masculine callers from coming too often and usually succeeded brilliantly. When the door bell rang in the evening Mr. Burrell promptly opened wide his library door and seated himself where he could see and be seen from the old-fashioned parlor across the hall, and ever so often would drop his paper or book and glare at any unfortunate young man who had the effrontery to trespass on his hospitality. At ten o'clock precisely, Mr. Burrell would stalk out into the hall and wind the tall clock, noisily and ostentatiously, bang shut any open windows or doors and then, if that did not do the trick, pace angrily back and forth the length of the hall, his aspect growing more and more ferocious, until the interloper fled in terror. It was no small wonder then that Jacqueline had few evening callers, but she cared so little she only laughed and said that as a ruiner of romance she would match her father against any one on earth. Let him do his "darnedest" during these last two years if it made him any happier. It wouldn't be so very long, now, until she was free.

Mr. Burrell's "darnedest," however, had little or no effect on the persistent Dr. Whittemore and the latter infuriated Mr. Burrell almost to the apoplectic point by always hailing him with a cheerful, "Well, how is our paterfamilias this evening?" Mr. Burrell never replied

to these salutations, except by a grunt, and refused all the choice cigars offered him, refused even the quart of old bonded rye whiskey with which the "popinjay" tried to win his favor. Having complied with the formalities and done his duty by his lady love's father, Dr. Whittemore would select the two most comfortable chairs in the parlor and place them with their backs to the library door and then proceed to ignore Mr. Burrell and entertain Jacqueline as serenely as if her father were asleep upstairs. When ten o'clock came Dr. Whittemore seemed absolutely unaware of Mr. Burrell's hints that it was time for decent people to be in bed, although once he paused in the middle of a story, looked over his shoulder at Mr. Burrell's infuriated back, and remarked blandly to Jacqueline that he feared her father was too subtle for him, and resumed his tale where he had left off. Jacqueline, however, being unable to achieve a similar disregard for disturbing externals, usually sent him home soon after ten and when that time came Dr. Whittemore would always shake Mr. Burrell by the hand, assure him of the pleasure it had been to see him and express a fervent hope of meeting him soon again.

All of this amused Jacqueline so much that she often laughed about it for hours. Moreover, she enjoyed Dr. Whittemore on his own account. He was always good fun and, unlike Kent Allen, talked little about himself and a great deal about Miss Jacqueline Burrell, flattering her adroitly, saying audaciously amusing things about his boundless admiration for her, and the certainty of their future together, which he persisted, in spite of Jacqueline's snubs, in regarding as settled, professing him-

self to be concerned only with the time and manner of his chosen lady love's surrender.

Because of the strain on her father, Jacqueline was careful not to let Dr. Whittemore come to the house very often and when she wished to see him, met him usually at the home of one of her aunts. Both her Aunt Sally and Aunt Nancy welcomed this new suitor not only for himself, but because they expected him to put an end, once and forever, to Jacqueline's wild and unnatural ideas about leaving home and making her own living. His mother, it was said, was related to the Cadwallader-Jones of Philadelphia and he certainly seemed a lovely young man, and so polite. Even Cousin Julia Markam favored his suit, though she was somewhat puzzled at the airy lightness with which Jacqueline treated and discussed him.

"I am thinking," said Jacqueline to her, "of building platforms outside the parlor windows and selling seats for the show when that heavy villain Dr. Whittemore calls on little angel-faced Jacqueline. Really, I never saw anything funnier in my life than Father last night when Dr. Bertie was singing, 'And we will raise a family,' and making eyes at me. I laughed about it all night."

"Your father is certainly very unreasonable about Dr. Whittemore."

"What *isn't* he unreasonable about? But he's met his match for once in Albert Reed Whittemore. What makes Father the very maddest is that Sheeby has fallen so hard for him. If she hears me say at six o'clock that he is coming to see me that evening, at nine she appears with a cake hot out of the oven and the grandest ice cream

you ever ate. Bertie adores good food, for all he's so thin, and Sheeby seems to know by instinct what he likes best. She's certainly doing all *she* can to offset Father and help me catch myself a husband."

Jacqueline, for once, was not exaggerating about Sheeby. Sheeby had never set much store on this tale of Mis' Jac'line leaving home and goin' to work, and she knew she would never have any real peace of mind until the girl was safely married and settled in a home of her own. When Dr. Whittemore began his open court of Jacqueline Sheeby naturally was delighted and had no patience whatever with Mr. Burrell's outrageous way of acting. Here was a perfectly elegant young gentleman, toney, grand-lookin', dressed up fit-to-kill, money in his pockets and all the women in town layin' theirselves out to catch him, and Mr. Burrell treated him worse'n ef he'd been the dirt under his feet. How could her papa ever expect Mis' Jac'line to get married, carryin' on so? Sheeby grew almost snappish with her employer under the strain of her worry lest Dr. Whittemore take offense and pass on to some household where he would be properly welcomed and treated.

But it was not until early March, when the warm Spring rains had come and the first restless buds were beginning to burst forth, that Sheeby had any doubts about Mis' Jac'line's attitude toward her suitor. She had comforted herself with the assurance that Mis' Jac'line was no fool and knew how to handle and hold onto this young doctor man, even ef she didn't know nothin' about handlin' her papa. All winter Mis' Jac'line had been goin' round with her eyes shinin' and her voice honey soft and

Sheeby, not being born yesterday, knew what *that* meant. Evidently, Dr. Whittemore knowed it too, for he kept right on a-comin', steddy and regular, payin' no 'tention to Mr. Burrell's onreasonableness, slippin' Sheeby and Hallie many a half dollar, until Sheeby quite took heart and decided there was no reason for worryin'. Consequently, it was a bolt out of the blue, and she had a violent quarrel with her cousin Carrie Moody when the latter told her that Mis' Blue had said that the Henderson twins had sworn on her Bible that they had seen Mis' Jac'line Burrell out in an old barn on the river bluffs smokin' cigarettes and drinkin' gin with Kent Allen, the carpenter, who everybody knowed was a wild one and never stayed home more'n two months at a time before he was off again huntin' more devilmint.

Sheeby had known of course that Jacqueline made a practice of spending her Sunday afternoons away from home and she was very sure the girl went off so regularly to meet some man but had carelessly taken it for granted that the man was Dr. Whittemore. Who else *could* it be? Sheeby, although she was disturbed, did not believe her cousin's story until she had gone herself at dusk and peered through an uncurtained window in the made-over barn at the two sitting so happily together, in the firelight, though Mike woke up and began to bark so that she could not make out what they were doing beyond jest settin' there, side by side.

Sheeby went home more upset and shaken than she had been since Jacqueline came from school, and for a week she hardly knew what to do. Mr. Burrell's gout was particularly bad that week, however, and he helped

her to decide by acting even worse than usual and threatening to show that "popinjay" the front door if he didn't stop forcing himself where he wasn't wanted. The following Sunday afternoon when Mr. Burrell woke from his nap in the library and turned on his light, Sheeby tapped at the door.

"Come in," growled Mr. Burrell. "Is supper ready?"

" 'Tain't six o'clock yet," said Sheeby, coming in and closing the door mysteriously.

"Well, what is it?" Mr. Burrell was annoyed with Sheeby for her perverse and unaccountable fondness for the popinjay and wanted her to feel his displeasure.

"Mr. Burrell, there's something on my mind I got to tell you and I ain't rightly sure how you're goin' to take it. It's about Mis' Jac'line. She ain't been actin' right."

"We'll not discuss Miss Jacqueline."

"But we've *got* to discuss her, Mr. Burrell. You ain't liked it much when I favored Dr. Whittemore comin' here to see her. But ef you knowed what I know, you'd favor him too."

"I told you we . . ."

"Mr. Burrell, Mis' Jac'line ain't got no mother to look out fer her. You and me's got to talk this over. Where do you suppose she's been spendin' her Sunday afternoons the last two months?"

Then she told him, bluntly, without softening it, what the Henderson boys had said, what she had seen with her own eyes. "I don't believe it," cried Mr. Burrell. "It's ridiculous . . . out of the question."

"That's what I told Carrie. Then I went and seen for myself."

"You saw her drinking gin . . . with this . . . Allen?"

"No, sir, I didn't see her drinkin' nothin', but I didn't get very close. It was the Henderson boys said they seen her drinkin' and smokin' cigarettes. She's been meetin' him secret in that old barn for months. All the colored folks is talkin' about it and we got to stop their mouths. The best way I know is to marry her quick as we kin to Dr. Whittemore before he hears about it and mebbe won't want to marry her."

"My God, Sheeby, do you mean to imply . . . that my daughter . . . that Miss Jacqueline . . ."

"No, sir. I ain't implyin' nothin'. I'm jest tellin' you what the talk is. And young folks is young folks, Mr. Burrell, black or white."

The door opened and Jacqueline walked in with Mike at her heels, eyes shining, cheeks whipped pink by the wind, her hair and skirts smelling of the damp sweet out of doors. Sheeby stole away and left the father and daughter together. "Why, what's the matter?" asked Jacqueline. "Has Dr. Whittemore been here teasing you?"

Mr. Burrell gulped, swallowed, made a great effort and controlled himself. "Jacqueline . . . I don't believe it of course . . . I almost feel I should apologize for telling you . . . but Sheeby has got hold of some . . . unpleasant gossip among the darkies . . . and I hardly know how to stop it without your help. They say that you have been meeting one of the Allen boys . . . the carpenter . . . I don't know his name . . . in an old barn somewhere . . . for months . . . and smoking cigarettes and drinking gin with him. Of course it's some one else."

"Of course I haven't been drinking any gin. But the rest of it is true."

"You don't mean that you . . ."

"Now don't get excited, Father. I've known Kent Allen all my life and I happened to walk down the river lane and found him there building over that old barn on the Wood place. And I've gone back a few times and helped him paint and do things like that . . . I love to paint. Afterwards we've built a fire and made tea . . . That's all there is to it. I wish Sheeby would mind her own business."

"You didn't smoke with him?"

"Yes, I smoked with him. I learned to smoke at school. I haven't done it around the house because I knew you wouldn't like me to."

"You smoked . . . cigarettes . . . and met this carpenter . . . a carpenter . . . you, Jacqueline Burrell . . . in secret . . . a carpenter."

"Father, if you will just calm down, I'll tell you all about it. Kent Allen is one of the most unusual boys I ever met in my life. He was an officer in the war and he . . ."

"I don't want to hear anything more about him. I don't want ever to hear his name again."

Jacqueline tried to explain further but her father cut her short. She realized that she was in for another scene but she was so unconscious of actual wrong doing that she was utterly taken aback at the violence of her father's anger. She was used to his rages, his unreasonableness and lack of understanding but never before had she seen him like this. He raved, swore, pounded on the table,

was scarcely coherent and yet he said things she could not misunderstand . . . unbelievable things. To add to the confusion Mike began to snarl and bark, thinking the idol of his heart was about to be torn limb from limb.

"Put that damned dog out."

Jacqueline led Mike forcibly to the door and thrust him through. Then she closed the door and stood with her back to it, head up and apparently very calm. She had been so happy a few minutes ago when she entered that room.

"What did you mean, Father, when you said that I had disgraced you . . . dishonored you and my name?"

Mr. Burrell never stopped to ask himself whether there was any basis for Sheeby's insinuation that it would be wise for them to get Jacqueline married as quickly as possible. In his heart of hearts he knew that there was not. But to him a woman, no matter how innocent, who had had mud thrown at her was as truly besmirched as if she had sinned. This belief was at the bottom of his desire to shelter and protect his daughter and to shield her from any possible contamination,—one reason for his bitter opposition to her desire to go her own way and stand on her own feet. He had been forced against his will to give her a great deal of freedom. Now she was reaping the natural results. And not only she but he, though so entirely innocent, had to suffer. It was *his* name as well as hers that was being dragged in the dust. All over town there would be snickers, dirty jokes when one mentioned the name of Burrell. Some would pity him . . . he who had always held his head so high. Others would sneer. It was all unbearable. He did not at the

moment think of Jacqueline's mother, but he forgot himself long enough to thank God his own proud lady mother was not on earth to witness her grand-daughter's shame.

Mr. Burrell was especially incensed because Jacqueline had admitted brazenly that she had smoked cigarettes with that unspeakable Allen cad. Mr. Burrell had heard, of course, that there were plenty of women calling themselves respectable who smoked, but in his eyes a cigarette-smoking female meant but one thing. And Jacqueline, instead of begging his forgiveness on her knees, kept on repeating, parrot-like, "What did you mean when you said I was disgraced and dishonored? What did you mean?"

He almost snarled at her, "You know perfectly well what I mean."

Jacqueline could hear Mike whining and scratching at the door. She thought of Kent's clear honest eyes. Thank God there was something clean and decent in the world. She thought of Kent's strong young arms and how quickly, how quickly he would knock any one down who dared to suggest what her father had suggested—any one, that is, except her father. She supposed he would hesitate about hitting her father. Fathers of course had privileges. Fathers could hurt you so that you would never get over it. Fathers could think vile indecent things about you . . . and go on living and being happy and respected . . . and self-respecting. Mothers of course were different. If her mother had lived. . . .

She turned blindly to go but her father stopped her. "I suppose," he snapped, "that you imagine yourself in love with this . . . this day laborer?"

Jacqueline flared, "He is *not* a day laborer. And even if he were . . ."

Her father stood menacingly before her, his face purple with wrath, and Jacqueline, who a moment before had been trembling, desperate with her hurt and shame of the things her father had said to her, was swept suddenly by a wave of exaltation and a certainty of knowledge such as she had never felt about anything before. Her face was radiant. "Why, yes," she said almost wonderingly, "I *do* love him . . . but I did not know it . . . until now."

Mr. Burrell was unexpectedly frightened. What he wanted from Jacqueline was a fierce denial of guilt, an angry defense of herself. Always before she had been quick to defend herself, ready to quarrel with him as violently as he now desired. He did not know what to make of her quietness . . . the look in her eyes. Was it possible . . . ?

"You dare to admit to me . . . to tell me," he began, but stopped uncertainly.

"I admit nothing except that I love Kent Allen," said Jacqueline, "and I have nothing to tell you except how proud I am to love him—and that you could not understand."

Then she opened the door and was gone leaving her father more frightened than he had ever been in his life.

CHAPTER XVII

It was three days before Mr. Burrell saw his daughter, four more before she spoke to him. They met only at meals, where they sat silently opposite each other, scarcely eating while Hallie, worried and woebegone, passed the food. Sheeby remained in her kitchen almost as distressed and unhappy as Mr. Burrell. Sheeby, even though she had exaggerated for her own purposes the gossip about Jacqueline, had meant no harm to the girl. She honestly believed that Jacqueline was heading straight for trouble in her secret meetings with Kent Allen and that it was necessary for her father to stop them. Sheeby was especially distressed because Jacqueline not only refused to answer Dr. Whittemore's daily telephone calls but instructed Hallie to tell him she was out when he called—which order the kind hearted Hallie interpreted somewhat freely and assured the worried young man that Mis' Jac'line refused to see him only because of a raging toothache. When Dr. Whittemore sent flowers, box after box of flowers, Sheeby cheered up a little. As long as Dr. Whittemore had heard nothing and kept a-comin' all was not lost.

On the Sunday following Sheeby's disclosures, Jacqueline, at the end of the silent midday dinner, followed her father into the hall and told him she had something to say to him. Mr. Burrell did not reply, but pausing at the library door, held it open for her. Jacqueline did not sit down.

"I merely wanted to tell you," she said coldly, "what I have decided. At first I thought I would go away, but then I realized that if there really *is* talk about me, the best thing I can do is to stay and face it. In the fall I shall go to New York as I planned two years ago, but by that time the scandal mongers will probably have talked themselves out."

Mr. Burrell picked up a cigar, clipped its end and lit it. He did not look at Jacqueline. "Is that all?" he asked.

"Not quite. Kent Allen is leaving town for good . . . in May . . . but I realize now that for his sake as well as mine it will be wiser for me not to see him again—except once to tell him good-by. I am going this afternoon to say good-by."

"If you do, it will be without my consent or permission."

"I am sorry, but it seems necessary for me to go. Or if you prefer, I shall send for Kent to come here?"

"Under no circumstances will I allow him to come to this house."

"Very well, then. I'll have to see him where I can. But I will be home before dark."

Mr. Burrell as well as Jacqueline had had a week to think things over and calm down. He made no further protest, feeling his helplessness, but he was reassured by Jacqueline's statement that she would not see Kent but once again. Surely, if she herself suggested giving him up, there could be nothing very wrong nor could she care much for him. There seemed no guilt or shame in Jacqueline's attitude. She had been foolish of course, reckless and headstrong as usual, but even she had recognized the impossibility of going on with the affair as soon as

she knew it had been found out. Women, young girls, were romantic silly creatures, their credulity easily imposed upon. This Allen boy had been in the war and was probably a clever braggart. He had known such braggarts, social inferiors, who could doubtless fool and entertain silly women. But after all Sheeby had probably exaggerated the gossip. She meant well, of course, but womanlike, she believed everything she heard. Mr. Burrell was ready now to let bygones be bygones and forgive and forget. He lay down on his couch, happier than he had been for a week, and almost instantly fell asleep.

Jacqueline had planned that she and Kent should have a last happy afternoon together before she told him, but as soon as he saw her he knew that something had happened. "What's the matter?" he asked quickly.

"Everything," said Jacqueline, and seated herself on the top porch step.

It was a warm afternoon in late March with the air full of sweet vague smells and musical with bird calls. Already the grass showed green in patches and the Red Bud was in bloom. Below them, hidden somewhere in the yellowing bushes, meadow larks were sending out their yearning liquid love songs. There were robins about, myriads of robins and, if one watched, now and then a flash of scarlet from a migrating Kentucky cardinal. Another week and the wild crab apples would be in bloom and the grass purple with violets and starred with creamy wild crocuses and little pale pink Dutchmen's breeches. So often Jacqueline had come here after them. She had thought that she and Kent would gather them together

this year. She sat now with elbows on her knees, her chin cupped in her hands, her eyes on the great sluggish river so far below her moving unhurriedly toward the sea, and told herself that she could never bear to come again and pick the wild flowers. And the little house—the little white house that she was deserting. . . .

Kent moved restlessly about on the porch. Then he dropped to a seat beside her. He was wearing his usual khaki trousers and high laced boots but had discarded his flannel shirt for one of blue cotton. "Won't you tell me what the trouble is?" he asked anxiously.

"Can't you guess?"

"You're going away?"

"Not for a while . . . not until fall. But my father has found out that I have been coming here . . . I can't come again." Jacqueline could not bear to tell Kent of the ugly talk—hoped he might keep unspoiled a memory of their happy days together.

"I suppose your father never knew you came. I sometimes wondered."

"I never tell my father anything I don't have to. He's probably the most unreasonable man in existence. Let's don't talk about him."

"I knew it would come sometime. I hoped . . . not so soon," said Kent. Mike, who had been lying at Jacqueline's feet came over and licked Kent's hand. Mike knew there was trouble and had scarcely let Jacqueline out of his sight for a week. Now his eyes begged this man-god to straighten out the tangle that was making every one so unhappy. Dogs could only suffer and stand

by. A man-god could do anything. He began to bark frantically and his tail beat a pleading tattoo on the hard well trodden ground.

"I'm afraid it's beyond me, old fellow," answered Kent, unhappily. He turned to Jacqueline. How pretty she looked in that dress—the color of old brick. He loved brick—there was nothing that time mellowed so beautifully. He once had dreamed of building some day a brick house for himself like an old Georgian mansion he had seen in Virginia. Now he did not believe he would ever want to build a house for himself.

"Of course you know . . . this knocks the props all out from under me."

"I'm not very happy myself," said Jacqueline. "But, anyway, you are going away in two months."

"Yes. I know."

"I hope you will write and let me know how you get on in Paris. I'll be awfully interested to know."

"I'm not much good at letters. My mother says I have been too busy talking all my life to learn to write and I guess she knows. But I'll make a stab at it if you want me to."

"I do want you to," said Jacqueline and then, in spite of all she could do, tears came in her eyes. She hoped Kent would not see them but he did.

"I feel like crying myself . . . and it takes a good deal to make me cry. I guess it doesn't mean so much to you . . . but to me it's like the end of the world." Jacqueline did not answer . . . could not. "Anyway," went on Kent huskily, "it's going to make me feel happier . . . sometimes . . . to remember you did care enough

to cry . . . a little." He got up, walked away a few steps and came back. "You might as well know . . . I want you to know that I meant what I said one Sunday . . . that when I found my girl I was going on working for her the rest of my life, whether she cared for me or not. I thought then I'd found her . . . and now I know it. There's never going to be any one for me . . . but you."

Jacqueline had not realized how overwrought she was. She could no longer control herself, and leaning against a white pillar, cried openly. Kent stood over her and she could feel his eyes on her. It seemed a long, long while before he spoke.

"After all, Jacqueline," he said at last, and his voice was humble, "if you feel that way about it, I don't have to go to Paris. I *am* a graduate architect, you know, and when I've sold this house I'll have three thousand dollars. And if the worst came to the worst I can always pull down my nine dollars a day."

"I was so afraid . . . you wouldn't say that," sobbed Jacqueline, "but of course I wouldn't let you."

. . . . . .

Mr. Burrell slept so well he did not waken until dusk. Almost his first thought was of Jacqueline. She had promised to be back before dark and here it was almost night. He got up angrily, snapped on the reading lamp on the center table, but gave a long sigh of relief when he heard a slight tap at the door. "May we come in?" asked Jacqueline timidly.

"Come in, come in," said her father genially. He had jumped to the conclusion that Sarah was with her and was relieved, for a third person would help break the ice

and aid him and Jacqueline to get back to the old relationship. Not that he by any means had forgiven Jacqueline. Her conduct had been far too reprehensible for that. But he was getting older. These quarrels took it out of him. It was impossible to go on as they had the last week. Mr. Burrell was in the act of lighting his cigar when he looked up and saw standing close behind Jacqueline a young man in a blue shirt and a shabby tweed coat. "Who are you?" he demanded loudly, but he knew of course who it was.

Jacqueline had tried to persuade Kent not to come, but he had insisted. "Some one has to tell your father and it seems to me I'm the one. I'll wait if you like, but we've had too much secrecy already. The sooner the better, as far as I am concerned."

"Oh, I'll have to tell him as soon as I go back . . . he'll ask me first thing. But you have no idea how disagreeable he can be when he is angry. And he is furious at you because I've been meeting you. He'll say terrible things."

"Will he say them to you if I'm not there?"

"Oh, yes, but I'm used to them."

"I think I'd better go with you. I'm kind of interested in finding out what he has to say."

They were walking along the river lane, the Ford being loaned to a younger brother for the day. In his right hand Kent carried his dinner bucket, but his left was thrust into the pocket of his coat and held Jacqueline's right hand in a firm warm clasp. It was Jacqueline who had put it there. Kent was still a little shy of her, shy of touching her, but his eyes worshiped her.

"Kent, I can't bear to have you hurt . . . and insulted."

Kent laughed. "I wouldn't worry if I were you about my feelings. You forget that I've been a private in President Wilson's democratic army. I'll take off my hat to your father if he can think up a tenth of the things to call me that my first sergeant used to. That man was an artist. To insult me now you've got to knock me down."

When Mr. Burrell asked who he was, Kent answered readily, "It's Kent Allen, sir. I've been away so much the last seven or eight years you probably don't recognize me."

Mr. Burrell took one long look at him and then deliberately turned his back. "I told my daughter that under no circumstances were you ever to cross my threshold. I have nothing to say to you, except, 'Get out of my house and stay out.' "

"Father!"

"Never mind, Jacqueline. He hasn't heard our news yet. Mr. Burrell, Jacqueline and I are planning to get married. Don't you think we had better talk that over? If you have any objections to me, and I judge you have, I'll be glad to hear what they are."

"Leave Miss Burrell's name out of this. I forbid you to mention her again."

"Well, I'll do my best, but it's a little difficult under the circumstances," said Kent good naturedly. "Now would you mind telling me just what you have against me?"

"I have so many objections I do not care to discuss them."

"But that's a little unreasonable, sir. After all, Mr. Burrell, I'm a graduate of one of our leading universities and I am prepared to take care of Jac . . . of a wife."

"As a carpenter?"

"If necessary, as a carpenter, but I hardly think that will be necessary. I'm a graduate architect and I've earned money enough this last year for my start. I was offered in the fall a position as draughtsman with Hatton and Hatton in Kansas City. You may know them by reputation. They are a first class firm."

The information that Kent had a profession as well as a trade, instead of mollifying Mr. Burrell only the more enraged him. In his eyes, once a carpenter always a carpenter. He had, however, no intention of arguing this debatable point.

"I suppose you think it is nothing to her father," he said with bitter scorn, "that you persuaded a young inexperienced girl to meet you in secret under circumstances that have caused the town to ring with the most unpleasant gossip about the two of you."

Kent flushed. "It's hard to believe that, Mr. Burrell. I'm sure the talk can't be very general or my folks would have heard it. They generally do hear anything about me almost before I do myself. And surely no one who knows Jacqueline could think any wrong of her."

"That is a very pretty theory, but it unfortunately does not hold water. I happen to know what I have just stated is true."

"It wasn't Kent's fault, Father. He never asked me to meet him. I just went. He didn't even know that I had not told you about seeing him."

"Well, I had a suspicion that you hadn't," said Kent frankly, "and I guess I'm to blame all right if any one is. Mr. Burrell, if I've done anything to hurt Jacqueline I'll feel worse about it than you do. It never occurred to me that there was any harm in her coming to my place in broad daylight. I can't say even now that I'm sorry, for if she hadn't I never would have got to know her. But it seems to me, sir, that if Jacqueline tells her friends how it happened and I tell mine and our engagement is announced, all open and aboveboard, the talk will die down quicker'n it started."

Mr. Burrell had kept his temper nobly, but this was too much. He brought his fist down on the table with a bang and fairly roared at Kent. "There will be no engagement between you and my daughter. Haven't I told you to get out of my house? Get out! Get out and stay out!"

"All right," said Kent, "I heard you the first time and I'm going. It'll be just as you say about the engagement. I never did believe much in long engagements myself. How about getting married to-morrow morning, Jacqueline?"

"Why . . ." Jacqueline began uncertainly. She glanced at her father, who stood glaring at Kent, his hands twitching nervously. "Father," she said gently, "Kent and I don't want to hurt you or do anything hastily or without your permission. Kent doesn't really want to get married in the morning and neither do I. We'll do almost anything we can to please you, except give each other up."

Mr. Burrell swung a chair around and seated himself with his back to Kent and Jacqueline, but he did not

reply. Jacqueline put her hand pleadingly on Kent's sleeve.

"I guess Jacqueline's right, Mr. Burrell. I'm sorry I lost my temper. I think I'd better be going now, but I hope you will let me come back soon and talk this thing out."

"I have nothing to say to you . . . now or at any further time," said Mr. Burrell over his shoulder.

Kent hesitated. "If it's my family you object to, Mr. Burrell, my mother belongs to a branch of the Woods of Maryland. Her father died when she was a baby from a wound he got fighting for the South. I never paid much attention to those things myself, but if you got her started, she could probably match you ancestor for ancestor. My father's a good plain American . . . his people were farmers . . . and he's never made much money, but he's brought up six children and never owed any man a cent or had a scandal in his family. This being America and the twentieth century, that's all I have to say on that score. And don't think for a minute that I am apologizing for my folks—they don't need any apology. I never found any others yet I'd trade them for."

"I am not," said Mr. Burrell coldly, "interested in your family history."

"No? Well, I thought you might be. There's one thing more. Do you want me to see Jacqueline here or some place else?"

"She will never with my consent see you again."

"Well, then, I guess there's nothing more to be said. Of course you understand I mean to go on seeing her."

"It may interest you to know," said Mr. Burrell,

"that if my daughter marries without my consent, she will never then or in the future receive a single penny from me."

Again Kent flushed. "I've been making my living since I was sixteen, Mr. Burrell, and I never counted on getting anything except what I earned. Good night."

"Is he always like that?" asked Kent of Jacqueline, as she walked to the front gate with him.

"Always . . . when he can't get his own way. He was really very reasonable and calm . . . for him."

"I'm sorry I let him get my goat. But it did make me hot under the collar being ordered out of the house that way."

"I think you were wonderful, Kent . . . perfectly wonderful the way you kept your temper. I can't tell you how heavenly it was to stand there and have some one do my fighting for me."

"If that's all you ever ask me to do for you . . ." He stopped, turned and drew her close to him. "Jacqueline, are you *sure?* Are you ever going to be sorry?"

"Never . . . never in the world."

"It may be a struggle for a while . . . doing your own work and going without things. Some day I am going to make you all the money you want . . . but you've never been poor . . . you don't *know* what it means."

"Kent, are you sorry already . . . trying to back out?"

"I? Sorry?" His arms tightened about her until she could scarcely breathe. "Marry me to-morrow, girl. Please! So many things might happen. Your father . . . every one is going to try to take you away from me. I have a feeling, almost a certainty, that if we don't get

married soon we never will. And I love you so . . . My girl!"

They clung together, two young things frightened of the unknown they could not see or face. Like all lovers, they were already conscious that somewhere before them loomed the one inevitable parting. The flower of happiness was so ephemeral! And so the more Jacqueline gathered herself to reassure her lover that nothing earthly could make her give him up. A sudden violent sound, piercing the evening stillness, caused them to spring apart. It was Mr. Burrell, stumbling over Kent's forgotten dinner bucket on the polished hardwood floor of the hall. A moment later, the front door was flung open and the tin pail came crashing down the cement walk, shrieking mad protests against such undeserved ill treatment. Fortunately, Kent laughed and Jacqueline, after a moment's hesitation, joined him. It was all the funnier because they did not dare to make a sound and they laughed, clinging to each other, until they were weak.

"Well, that's that," said Kent, finally rescuing his dinner bucket. "I think I had better be moving on. I have to be up at six and I have another row on my hands before I go to bed."

"A row? Over what?"

"Well . . . of course I'll have to tell my folks the news . . . and they'll have a good deal to say."

"You mean . . . they won't want you . . . to marry *me?*"

"It won't be *you* they object to, though they won't care much for me butting into a family that doesn't want me, but my mother's terribly set on my going on with my

studies and graduating at the Beaux Arts. But it'll be all right. She's the best ever. Don't you worry."

"Oh, Kent, I oughtn't to let you give that up. We ought to wait."

"I thought we settled that this afternoon."

"I know, but I'm afraid I shouldn't have given in."

"Look here, Jacqueline. That matter's settled once and for all. I'm not going to argue it. And I serve notice right now that I'm not going to wait for you more than a month or two . . . not long after I get my Kansas City job anyhow. You won't *make* me wait, will you, honey? If you knew . . . how much I want to be sure of you!"

"Kent, I haven't told you, but my mother left me thirty thousand dollars. Father has the full control of it until I am thirty or marry with his consent. If we could only persuade him to give that to me . . . or the income at least . . . I could go to Paris with you."

Jacqueline was standing so close to Kent that even in the darkness she could see his face light up. "My God, girl . . . do you suppose there's any chance?"

"I'm afraid not. But, oh, it's so unfair!"

"Well, I guess we better not think about it. I'll get on all right just as I told you this afternoon. With you to work for . . . well, just watch me!"

Jacqueline turned when Kent had left her and went slowly up the path to the house. Her father she knew was waiting for her . . . waiting with reproaches and upbraidings and bitter taunts, but that hardly mattered now—would never matter very much again. She felt almost sorry for him. She would try to be patient. But she sighed a little as she turned the door handle and went in.

CHAPTER XVIII

At noon next day Kent telephoned Jacqueline that he had to see her that evening for a very special reason and she told him she would meet him next door at her Cousin Julia Markam's. Then she went immediately herself to break the news to her cousin.

"Cousin Julia, I've invited my best boy friend to come and see you this evening."

"Of course, honey, any time. I'll take Cousin Henry upstairs early."

"I want Cousin Henry to meet him . . . you see I'm thinking of marrying this young man."

"Jacqueline, darling, I am *so* glad!" said Cousin Julia, kissing her. "Every one has such lovely things to say about him. All the doctors . . ."

"Oh, are you talking about Bertie Whittemore?"

"But who else could it be?"

"Oh, just Kent Allen."

"Who's Kent Allen?"

Then Jacqueline, her eyes aglow, told her who he was and all about him, told of their first meeting, and other meetings, of Sheeby's interference and its results. "And that's all, Cousin Julia, except that I love him so much that I'd rather die than give him up. And if you don't help me and stand by me, no one will."

Mrs. Markam's face was troubled. "Of course I'll help you . . . but, Jacqueline, I can hardly believe it. Do you mean Ed Allen's son?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"But it's so surprising. You father . . . why, he will be almost wild."

"Wild is the word. He kept me up until after midnight last night. Let's forget Father for awhile. I am so tired of listening to him . . . I am almost dead. Let's talk about Kent. Just wait till you see him. He's . . . well, just wait and see."

For all her brave words Jacqueline was a little worried, a little troubled lest Kent fail to make the impression she desired. Except for that stormy interview with her father, she had always seen him alone. Of course it wouldn't make any real difference what Cousin Julia and Cousin Henry thought, but she *did* value their good opinion. Cousin Henry, for all his quietness and unobtrusiveness, was extraordinarily shrewd—the kind of lawyer who always sent his partner to appear in court but to whom the other lawyers went when they were in difficulties. And Cousin Julia understood her better than any one in the world. Oh, they *must* like Kent . . . they *must* approve. She waited that evening with beating heart in the living-room until the door bell rang, then flew to open it. But Cousin Julia's colored Cora, who had been with her for twenty years and knew all the family secrets, had also been waiting and was there before her. Jacqueline hardly recognized the well groomed young man in the perfectly cut dark blue serge suit who stood in the hall.

"Hello," said Kent.

"Hello. Cora, this is Mr. Allen whom I am going to marry. Cora is one of my oldest friends."

"You're the first one of Miss Jacqueline's friends I've met," said Kent, smiling and shaking hands with her. Cora made shy, pleased little noises and disappeared.

Kent had not been in the living-room five minutes before Jacqueline realized proudly that she need never again be fearful of what others might think of her lover. He was a little shy, a little embarrassed, but so was she. So were Cousin Julia and Cousin Henry. And Kent carried himself so well, even though he was not so very tall, looked so manly. Jacqueline kept forgetting how much Kent had been around, how used he was to meeting people. The Markam house was the oldest in New Concord and in the living-room was the original white marble mantelpiece. Kent spoke of this almost immediately and admired also the perfect proportions of the room. Mr. Markam, who adored his house, was extraordinarily pleased. Kent went with him to examine the old doors and lintels, but his eyes kept wandering towards Jacqueline. Always before he had seen her in sports clothes. To-night she was wearing a French frock of flesh-colored chiffon—sleeveless, with pearls at her throat, and deep rose-colored velvet slippers. To think she was his—this beautiful radiant creature. She was so lovely he was almost afraid of her. He tried to talk to Mr. Markam but hardly knew what he was saying. Mrs. Markam must have guessed the state he was in, for after a few minutes she rose.

"Henry, these young people probably have a good deal to say to each other." She held out her hand to Kent. "I shall be glad," she said, "to have you come here any time, though I shall of course tell Jacqueline's father.

And if I don't fall in all at once with all your plans, it's not because I am not sympathetic. But Jacqueline's happiness means a great deal to her Cousin Henry and me."

"It means everything to me, Mrs. Markam. I mean . . . if I thought I couldn't make her happy I wouldn't want her to marry me."

"Jacqueline seems very sure you can. Have a little pity on your father, Jacqueline, and don't stay up too late."

They were alone. It was warm enough to let the furnace go out, cool enough for a wood fire. Jacqueline lighted a few candles in distant corners, switched off the electric lights. She piled cushions on the floor in front of the big couch by the fire and invited Kent to sit there. Candlelight and firelight—and his girl! His beautiful, beautiful girl! How fragrant she was! He had known of girls who smelled of perfume . . . but Jacqueline was like a flower.

"Jacqueline, I don't believe it. I'm afraid every minute I'll wake up."

"Kent, what did your mother and father say?"

"Oh, just what I expected. They'll be all right as soon as they get used to the idea."

"I'll go and see your mother . . . if she'd like me to."

"Of course she would. Said last night she wanted to see you."

"I'll go to-morrow. But what was the very special reason you had for wanting to see me?"

Kent told her that his boss, Mr. Schaefer, had agreed to rush through a lodge building in Weston, Missouri, and wanted him to go down there in the morning and take

charge. His part would take about six weeks and with overtime and a bonus would net him, aside from expenses, close to four hundred dollars. He wouldn't be able to get back to see her more than once or twice a month, but this would give him time to write to Kansas City and see what the chances were for getting in with a good firm of architects. Probably he would run down and see Hatton and Hatton, who had offered him a job last fall, paying $150 a month. That amount, with what he had saved, ought to carry them through until he had earned a raise.

"Is it all arranged? Are you going in the morning?" asked Jacqueline.

"On the six o'clock train."

"How about the little house on the bluff? Who is going to finish it?"

"Sam Brown's going to do that for me . . . there isn't much more to do. And Mr. Sumner . . . the high school professor . . . agreed Saturday to buy the place. He's crazy about it. I meant to tell you yesterday but your news made me forget it. We signed the papers to-day and he made his first payment."

"I see. But you said over the telephone you wanted to consult me."

"Well, I'm consulting you now."

"Your idea of a consultation seems to be to settle everything first and then come and tell me."

"If you have any good reason for my not going to Weston, I can start the job and come back. I had to say right off this morning whether I would go or not."

"My just not wanting you to go wouldn't be a reason?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Oh." She drew a little away from him.

"Look here, Jacqueline, there are some things I've got to decide. I've got the living to make, remember. Other things will be up to you. But we're both reasonable beings. I don't see why we can't talk things over and agree without quarreling."

"Kent, I'm sorry. I was a beast."

He drew her to him and kissed her as he had never kissed her.

"Kent?"

"Yes?"

"My father told me once that if a girl had ever been kissed by any one else no man would want to marry her. I never petted . . . because I didn't like to. I hated being pawed. But I was an awful flirt . . . and I was kissed plenty of times . . . on my nose and ears and hair. I wasn't exactly an innocent victim either . . . every time I had it coming to me. But it was always a scramble. I never kissed any one back but you."

"Has that Dr. Whittemore I hear every one's been expecting you to marry ever kissed you?"

"Bertie? Heavens, no!"

"Well, I guess I might manage to overlook your black past and make an honest woman of you."

They laughed gayly. Kissed again.

"Kent, some one told Father . . . I think it was Sheeby, our cook . . . that you used to be pretty wild. Is that true?"

"I drank too much a few times when I was a kid . . . raised a row once in a pool hall and old Dan Hadley, the

chief of police, went to my father about it. He straightened me out pretty quick. That's all I ever did around this burg.

"Look here, Jacqueline," went on Kent. "I raised my share of hell in France. I was barely twenty. I'll tell you all about it if you wish . . . but I'd rather not. I want to forget it. I always had a lot of surplus energy . . . but after I got back to this country I made up my mind that if I ever wanted to amount to anything I would have to cut out everything but work . . . and I did just that. It hasn't been easy . . . either. A man never knows . . . until he tries to let them alone . . . how many girls there are in the world."

There was silence between them while the firelight danced on the polished brass andirons. Cora, who was quieter than any mouse, made a mild racket in the dining-room and then brought in a silver tray loaded with amber-colored homemade wine, spice cake with white frosting and pale green grapes. She put the tray on a little table by Jacqueline's side and stole away.

"Jacqueline . . . you still love me? It hasn't made any difference?"

They had an exquisite hour before Kent had to go. Jacqueline would not let Kent take her home . . . said it would be better not.

"Jacqueline," called Cousin Julia as soon as the front door had closed behind Kent, "come on up. We aren't in bed."

She found her cousins sitting by the fire in their upstairs sitting-room.

"Well?" asked Jacqueline. "What do you think of him?"

"I think he's a dear," said Cousin Julia, "a real personality . . . and a gentleman."

"Of course he's a gentleman. You didn't think, did you, I'd fall in love with a boor?"

"Well, I confess I expected him to be a little more of a rough diamond."

"Cousin Henry, what do you think of him?"

"I think he's a nice manly boy and knows what he's about . . . always has. He used to help his older brother deliver papers when he wasn't much more than a foot high and I can remember what a likeable, freckle-faced youngster he was. If all you've told your Cousin Julia about him is true he ought to be trusted to make a name for himself."

"Of course it's true."

"Well, then I should say that the probabilities are that he is the most promising young man in this community. Now that you had sense enough to nose him out I hope you stick to him."

"I mean to, Cousin Henry."

"There'll be a lot of opposition, as you probably know . . . but you're a good fighter. The only thing that worries me is your own attitude toward young Allen."

"My attitude? . . . you mean whether I'm really in love?"

"No, not exactly. I suppose you're in love, but you've been brought up with a lot of fool notions about the superiority of your family. I'm wondering whether there may be a trace of condescension in your attitude toward this young man. I never knew a marriage yet to work out well where either one felt it necessary to condescend to the other."

"Cousin Henry, if I started in to tell you how much I admire Kent, how much I respect and look up to him for what he's done all by himself, I'd talk all night. Perhaps I did high-hat him a little at first . . . in my mind I mean . . . but that didn't last after I got to know him. I don't think silly artificial things like class distinctions and social position ever entered Kent's head. He's so perfectly simple and straightforward he just thinks of people as people and lets it go at that. And after all that's the aristocratic viewpoint, isn't it?"

"I don't know much about the aristocratic viewpoint," said Cousin Henry, "but I do know that most of us who live all our lives in country towns get an exaggerated idea of our own importance. As far as I can find out none of the branch of the Burrell family to which you belong has achieved anything of any particular importance for the past hundred years. You happen to be where you are today because your great-grandfather Burrell married the clever daughter of a shrewd old Scotch storekeeper. I don't believe you can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, but this Allen boy looks as if he came from good stock. Isn't he the grandson of Major Wood?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, he's of as good blood as you are. I wouldn't worry about marrying him."

"Good Heavens, Cousin Henry, you don't have to talk to *me* this way! I haven't spent all my life in New Concord. You just waltz yourself over to our house to-morrow night and repeat all you've just said to me to Father."

"Very well," promised Mr. Markam, and Jacqueline walked home on air, so happy and excited she could not

sleep for hours. She wakened with a grateful singing heart. She must tell Sarah, she must tell Simon and her aunts. Hallie brought her her breakfast on a tray and afterwards she went about her room, busy with little tasks. Hallie came in, fairly exuding excitement. "Mis' Allen's downstairs to see you."

"Mrs. Allen! Kent's mother!!" Jacqueline flew down the stairs. In the parlor sat a little faded woman, quietly dressed.

"Mrs. Allen . . . I'm *so* glad to see you."

Jacqueline held out both her hands . . . the other's were workworn and rough.

"Please come into the library . . . we can shut the door there."

Mrs. Allen had a dignity . . . there was no doubt of that. Her eyes were blue and direct . . . like Kent's. They were not unfriendly eyes . . . but neither were they friendly. And her mouth was firm. Jacqueline felt a little frightened. Why had she come? Her caller answered her thought.

"I've come about Kent, Miss Jacqueline. He tells me you two are planning to get married."

"Please call me Jacqueline, Mrs. Allen. I was coming to see you this afternoon."

"Kent told me . . . but I thought you might put it off . . . and I could not wait to talk to you."

"You're not pleased about our engagement?"

"We think Kent ought to wait and finish his studies before he marries. He has worked . . . you don't know how he has worked, to make that possible. The government would have helped him at the end of the war but

he wasn't ready—it took him two years to prepare himself for college. All his professors say he ought to go on . . . that he has great gifts. And I fear, I am almost certain . . . that he, and you as well, will some day regret it bitterly if he does not go on when he has the chance."

"I tried to persuade him to wait, Mrs. Allen. But he was determined not to."

"Kent is determined. And he's very much in love with you. But you're both young . . . it won't hurt you to wait a year or two."

"Kent says it may be four or five years before we can marry if he goes to the Beaux Arts."

"I know . . . he's said everything to me he's said to you. And I know just how you feel. His father and I made a runaway match ourselves."

"But we don't mean to run away."

"No, but you mean to marry without your parent's consent and that's almost the same thing. Kent's father was studying to be a civil engineer when I met him, and working as a surveyor during his summers. I was teaching a country school. He was much as Kent is now, though Kent has more force and energy than his father. But Mr. Allen had Kent's joyousness . . . his love of fun and delight in living. I've watched that die, my dear, little by little until there is scarcely a spark left. Lots of things have been hard in my life—having my children grow up without any advantages and with rough companions, but nothing has been so hard as watching my husband lose all his joy in life."

"But was that your fault . . . all from marrying you?"

"From marrying me . . . and giving up the work he was fitted for and failing in everything else."

"Kent isn't planning to give up his architecture."

"No, but he's planning to give up going to New York . . . says the living there is too expensive and that it would take too long to get established. Kent doesn't really like an inland town. My grandfather was a sea captain and Kent has the love of the sea in his blood and wants to live near it. He says a seaport thrills and inspires him. Has he ever shown you his drawings?"

"No. We've had so little time together."

"They're all of high buildings like they have in New York. It's been his dream for years . . . almost an obsession . . . to be one of the builders of a greater New York. You know he worked as a riveter during his vacations?"

"Yes, he told me."

"He could have made more money as a carpenter, but his heart is set on designing a high building as beautiful as the Woolworth tower and he wanted to study at first-hand the construction of steel buildings. It's terribly dangerous work . . . he did not tell me until afterwards what he was doing. I am afraid . . . I almost know . . . he will some day be very sorry if he settles down in Kansas City."

"I don't know what to say, Mrs. Allen. I shall have to talk with Kent. But I am afraid I am more apt to do what Kent says than he is to do what I say. I do care for him . . . most awfully. I never knew . . . until Kent came . . . how lonely I had been since my mother died. But of course I want to do what is best for him."

"It's best for him to finish his studies. He doesn't feel himself that he is fully prepared. Remember, my dear, that Kent has been at work since he was fifteen and had to work so hard putting himself through college that he hardly had a chance to get everything out of it he might have. He needs that foreign study and the contacts he'll make over there. You probably don't realize that many of the things you take for granted Kent doesn't know at all."

"But mightn't I be a little help to him?"

"Are you prepared to cook and wash and scrub floors for him . . . and have babies and take care of them at the same time? That's what being a poor man's wife means. I had my second baby when I had been married less than two years. And I had been poor all my life and was used to hard work. I got along though it made an old woman of me. But you've never been poor or known hard work."

Jacqueline remembered suddenly what she herself had said to Kent when he first told her of his dreams to be an architect . . . that his desire to build and create would be the main driving power in his life and not love or a woman. Was that true? Was it true of all specially talented ambitious people that their work, the development of their special gift or bent meant more to them in the long run than love? Kent wanted of course to have her and his career too. But had his love come at the wrong time? Would she hamper him by marrying him now?

Mrs. Allen, wisely, said little more, left in a few minutes without asking any promise of Jacqueline except to

think over what she had said. There was no one but Jacqueline who could persuade Kent to abandon his plan for a speedy marriage, as his mother admitted freely.

Jacqueline did not commit herself, but before Mrs. Allen left the girl was convinced that it would be right for her to make Kent go to Paris. In her heart of hearts she always had known that he ought to go. A year . . . two years . . . with the ocean between them! So many things might happen . . . sickness . . . accidents. And what was it Kent had said last night? "A man never knows until he tries to let them alone, how many girls there are in the world." She trusted him, of course. But what if he did not understand and left her resentfully? The girls in Paris were said to be the most seductive in the world. There was nothing they did not know about love . . . and the ways of winning men. And Kent, with his zest for life . . . his high spirits and his keen humor, would always be popular. How could she expect the French girls to let him alone? . . . of course they wouldn't let him alone. Jacqueline realized instinctively that she had roused forces in Kent that he had long kept dormant by sheer will power. If he left her now and went to Paris alone . . . Paris of all places . . . He had said himself that if they did not get married now he felt they never would. She feared that too. She *could not* send him away from her.

And yet she knew all the while that she would.

CHAPTER XIX

JACQUELINE wrote to Kent that afternoon—her first love letter, which in spite of herself she could not make very cheerful. After she had posted it she went to see Simon and told him at length all about Kent and how she had met him. Simon, who had not been well for a month, was in bed. His mind was unusually clear and he listened intently. He had known Kent as a boy but had not seen him for years.

"Yore Cousin Henry and Mis' Julia thinks he's all right?"

"Yes, they do—Cousin Henry especially. He's going to talk to Father this evening."

" 'Twon't do no good. When yore pappy gits started off on the wrong foot there ain't no changin' him. The more you argue to him he's wrong the madder and more sot he gits."

"I know . . . but we have to try, I suppose. Oh, Simon . . . he's been so beastly. Said such terrible things."

"Never you mind, honey. 'Twon't be for long. You'll be married quicker'n a bird can wink and ennyways he don't mean more'n half he let's on to."

"But I'm not going to be married, Simon . . . not for years and years. Kent's mother thinks we ought to . . . ought to wait . . ."

Here she broke down and began to cry and it was some time before Simon understood the situation. "Seems

right he should finish his schoolin'," said Simon thoughtfully. "A body can't do much without book learnin' these days."

"Yes, I know that . . . but, Simon, there's all that money Mamma left me. It's mine . . . she left it to me . . . and if I had it I could marry Kent and go to Paris too. I don't think Mamma knew what she was doing when she let Papa draw up her will that way. It was my own Grandfather Phillips' money. What right has Papa to it? He won't give it to me, just so he can keep me in his power."

Simon pondered this some time before he spoke. "Baby," he said solemnly, "yore Grandma come to me in a dream last night. It's the first time she's ever came and she couldn't get very clost. It seemed like she were on the far side of a river and I could see her plain as I see you settin' there but I couldn't rightly make out whut it were she were tryin' to tell me. But jest as she were goin' away I heard her call out, 'You'll understand, Simon. You'll understand soon.' "

Jacqueline was always interested in Simon's talk of her grandmother. She stopped crying and wiped her eyes. "*Do* you understand?" she asked.

"Yes, honey. It's clear as paint now whut she were after. She wants that I should help you out."

"Dear Simon. She ought to have known that it wasn't necessary to come back to ask you that. You're always helping me. But I'm afraid there isn't much you or any one can do."

"There's a chanct . . . mebbe," said Simon doubtfully, "but I got to think it over. You run erlong now

and leave me be. Mebbe I'll have somethin' to say to yore pappy."

Jacqueline did not think very highly of Simon's "chanct" or his suggestion that he talk to her father and she went reluctantly back to the house, dreading to face her father. It was later than she had realized and Mr. Burrell had not waited to begin dinner. He did not look up from his soup or return Jacqueline's greeting or apology, but just as they were finishing dessert he spoke.

"I learned to-day that one of the Allen girls was a nursemaid. It will be pleasant for you I should think . . . having a nurse maid for a sister-in-law."

"It was only for a short time years ago, to help out when Mr. Sawyer had the typhoid fever. And at least she was a good nursemaid. Mrs. Sawyer said she never had any one in her house so intelligent or kind. Mary Allen's married to a farmer now and very prosperous."

"Humph!" said her father scornfully. "Well, every one to his taste."

"Father . . . isn't that America? Isn't it what this country stands for?"

"What? Disobeying your father . . . dishonoring his name?"

"No . . . I mean, starting at the bottom and building up. There's good blood in the Allen family, even though their father happened to be unfortunate, and it's coming out in the children. They're all getting on in the world and making money. Their children will probably be our leading citizens."

"But they'll never be gentlemen or gentlewomen. A

little vulgar money success will never make them any less common than they are now."

"Kent isn't common, Father . . . and his mother isn't common. I don't know the others well enough to judge. The first thing Cousin Julia said about Kent was that he was a gentleman. And he is. All his instincts are fine."

"Your Cousin Julia said that only to encourage you to annoy and defy me. She knows as well as I do that that arrogant, blustering, common day laborer you brought into my house Sunday night for the deliberate purpose of insulting me to my face, is no more of a gentleman than . . . than Simon or Sheeby's Jess."

Jacqueline kept her temper nobly. "Well, I've always thought that Simon was a gentleman," she said. "He's often told me he had royal blood in his veins and I believe he has."

"Royal blood! Nonsense! Cannibal blood, probably!!"

"He says his great-grandfather was an African chief and I should think a chief might be a gentleman. I remember Grandmother telling me once that there were aristocrats and common people among the darkies the same as among the whites. She said Simon was one of the aristocrats. And I've heard Cousin Julia say a thousand times that if her Cora isn't a lady she isn't."

"Have it your own way! Have it your own way!! I admit that you know everything and I nothing. It was presumptuous of me to differ from you in the first place."

He stormed into the library and slammed the door leaving Jacqueline to wander restlessly about the house until

Cousin Henry arrived for his promised talk with her father. Then she huddled on the broad lower step of the stairs in the front hall, waiting to learn the result. At first she could hear only the low friendly rumble of voices, but presently she heard her father talking excitedly, and now and then a thud as his fist hit the table, and covered her ears so that she could not know what he was saying. She was in no mood to-night to bear any more. Presently, Cousin Henry came out and she rose and went with him to the side gate.

"It's no use, my dear. He's made up his mind. Arguing only makes him the more determined."

"I know. Cousin Henry, Kent's mother came to see me this morning. She thinks we ought not to get married until Kent has studied abroad and established himself in New York." Jacqueline went over Mrs. Allen's arguments in detail, hoping against hope that Cousin Henry would brush them aside.

"It's a big question, Jacqueline. I know very little of the young man except what you've told me, but I judge he is ambitious and a hard worker and has courage and initiative and a strong will. If he has in addition the ability you think and which I do not doubt, it seems rather a pity for him to saddle himself with a family before he's finished his studies or properly established himself."

"I wouldn't be a drag on him for anything on earth."

"You'd be a great help to him . . . eventually, but you're rather an expensive proposition, my dear. Two or three or four years aren't a lifetime, remember."

"I suppose you're right and if conditions were different at home perhaps I'd feel differently. But I have a feel-

ing that if I send Kent away from me . . . so far . . . when he doesn't want to go, he'll never come back."

"That's morbid, Jacqueline . . . not like you. How about this proposition of yours to go to New York? You were keen enough about that a little while ago."

"I'll do that of course . . . if Kent goes to Paris, but the two girls I was planning to live with have got married and some way it doesn't seem as easy to get a job and earn my own living as it used to. I suppose it's because I'm interested in nothing now but Kent."

"Perhaps, but I imagine you'd have a very good time in New York."

"How long do you suppose I'd be in New York, Cousin Henry, before Father found some way to get me back? He's not very scrupulous where I am concerned. At the very first sign of illness he'd send me an alarming telegram . . . and how could I refuse to come? And once here you know the pressure that would be put on me to stay. Look around you at the unmarried daughters you know in well-to-do families. How many of them have any freedom or independence? I could name half a dozen girls over thirty in this town alone whose fathers or mothers are fastened on their backs like regular old men of the sea. It wouldn't be quite that bad with me because I'd never let Father absorb me to the extent he wishes, but I'll never be free of him until I marry."

"After that you won't be free of your husband."

"But I won't want to be. That's the point. And I don't mean either that I want to dodge any decent reasonable obligations as far as Father is concerned. I only want to be independent of him as a grown son would be.

But he'll never let me . . . if he can help it. That's the reason he won't give me the money Mamma left me."

"Too bad. I wish there was something I could do about that."

"Cousin Henry, do you think Mamma meant to leave her money so that I couldn't have any possible use of it until I was on the brink of the grave?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. But your mother thought very highly of your father's judgment. She probably trusted him to do what was best for you."

"What was best for me!" repeated Jacqueline bitterly. "I don't doubt that's the way he put it to her. But you know that if Mamma had been let alone she never would have made her will that way. Isn't undue influence ground for breaking a will?"

"It would be impossible to prove that your father influenced your mother unduly. You mustn't think of attempting such a thing."

"I suppose not. But, Cousin Henry, I feel it in my bones that Father isn't quite comfortable about keeping that money. It makes him furious every time I mention it. He makes a great point of never using a penny of the income for my expenses and of investing it all for me as fast as it comes in. That's a sop to his conscience."

"Your Father probably feels uncomfortable because he knows that you are criticizing him for keeping the estate in his own hands. But he has spent a great deal more on you than the income from the original thirty thousand dollars."

"Well, why shouldn't he? Whom else has he to spend it on? Sheeby?"

"He might have married again . . . presented you with a crop of young brothers and sisters."

"I wish he had. I wish he had married somebody like Mrs. Chamberlain, who would have shown him a thing or two. I'll never forgive him about that money . . . never as long as I live."

"If I were you, Jacqueline, I'd try not to think about it. In a few years it will be yours . . . and a substantial sum . . . around seventy-five thousand dollars."

"But I want it now. It would mean everything to Kent and me if I could have it now. I'd a million times rather have the thirty thousand now than a hundred thousand when I'm thirty."

Jacqueline went to bed heavy hearted and wakened miserably depressed. But in the morning mail was her first letter from Kent—a gay, slangy, characteristic little letter, written on cheap yellow paper and ornamented with ridiculous drawings. One came every morning thereafter —invariably short, generally cheerful, a little awkward and shy over his attempts to express his love and always with one or more drawings in miniature on the margin—drawings of Kent on a steeple defying the world, drawings of Kent spearing cockroaches in his boarding house, sketches of his landlady, of the mayor, of what Kent called the Cracker Barrel Council that gathered every evening at the Weston post office. The sketches were crude of course, done hastily in pencil, but there was life and movement in every line—character or humor expressed in the droop of a back or in a sly malicious smile. Jacqueline thought them very wonderful and brought a little japanned box with a lock to keep them in. Some

day she would show them to her children. She meant of course to have children . . . four certainly . . . six possibly. How she would love Kent's babies . . . hers and Kent's! But never never so much as she loved Kent. Kent was her very life. She could never love any one again as she loved him.

Jacqueline needed her dreams those days to sustain her. She was determined to make no secret of her engagement and had told Sarah and Mrs. Sawyer, told her aunts and various cousins and friends. It had been a humiliating experience. Every one had been kind of course, had kissed her, wished her happiness, but not even the tactful Sarah could conceal her surprise or dismay. Jacqueline was going to marry Kent Allen, the carpenter, instead of that charming Dr. Whittemore? Jacqueline Burrell was to marry a carpenter!! It seemed unbelievable. That Kent had been an officer in the war and was a graduate of the Columbia School of Architecture apparently made no impression at all. Wasn't he still a carpenter? Hadn't every one seen him only last week in blue denim overalls nailing shingles on Nat Wilson's roof? And his brother Frank, the plumber, had mended her Aunt Sallie's leaks for years. A younger sister clerked in Ramsay's store . . . Aunt Nancy had bought her woolens from her at the January sale. No one mentioned Mary, the ex-nursemaid, in Jacqueline's hearing, but Jacqueline was only too conscious they were all thinking of her. Once, when Clara Denny happened at a Junior League meeting to say something slighting about her baby's nurse—"you know what nurses are"—every one turned red and looked anywhere but at Jacqueline. She walked

home afterwards with head held high and flaming cheeks. She didn't care, she didn't care! She loved Kent all the better. Snobs, fools, pin heads!! Some day they'd all be boasting that Kent came from their miserable old town. But she supposed every soda water clerk would still be patronizing and superior . . . never fail to mention that Kent had once been a carpenter, even if he became the greatest architect in the world or president of the United States. And they called themselves Americans . . . Christians. They who went to church to worship a carpenter. They made her sick . . . she hated them. She hated New Concord. If she once got away, she'd never, never come back.

Sheeby's threatened scandal proved the merest tempest in a teapot. The news of Jacqueline's secret meetings with Kent had filtered through a number of back doors and might have caused some unpleasant talk if Jacqueline, almost immediately, had not come right out and told of her engagement and all about it. The town of course was enormously interested and for a week or two talked of nothing but what was known as "Jacqueline's latest," but after the first few days scarcely any one mentioned the topic to the girl herself. A few congratulated her . . . Kent's teacher in the eighth grade, Mr. Schaefer for whom he worked, two or three of the younger men who had known Kent intimately when they were boys . . . Wirt Sawyer was one of these. But as a whole the town took their cue from Jacqueline's own family.

Mr. Burrell and his sisters and their various connections formed a powerful clan. Now they were firmly agreed, the Markams alone excepted, to ignore this threatened

blot on the scutcheon, or when that was not possible to treat it lightly. Jacqueline always had been notoriously notional and headstrong. Her father, with the best intentions in the world, had never understood quite how to handle her. Every one knew what young romantic girls were like when they were opposed, etc., etc. Mr. Burrell altogether refused to acknowledge that any engagement existed, and said heatedly, and very rudely, to the few who dared mention it to him that it was all nonsense . . . utterly absurd. When his sister Sally told him she feared that this Allen boy must have hypnotized Jacqueline, he grunted and said it looked like it. Mr. Burrell and his sisters soon reasoned themselves out of their panic and into a fairly hopeful frame of mind. At least the carpenter was out of town and Jacqueline had told them she hoped to persuade him to spend the next two years studying in Paris. A great deal could happen in two years. Even Dr. Whittemore, who had been for several days a visibly crushed and bleeding soul, took heart and resumed his calls on Jacqueline, assuring her plaintively that while there was life there was hope.

"Not in this case there isn't," said Jacqueline firmly.

Because she was very lonely and Dr. Whittemore cheered and amused her, Jacqueline let him come to see her, although it wasn't half the fun it used to be since her father, although he remained on guard in the library, sat with his back to the open door and scarcely moved from his chair until after her caller had gone.

CHAPTER XX

If Mr. Burrell had been wiser he would have let Jacqueline alone during this period, but he seemed possessed to nag and quarrel with her. With Sheeby's assistance he had got hold of the embellished and embroidered details of Kent's every youthful escapade, and easily convinced himself that Kent was a drunken, fortune-hunting libertine who deliberately had planned to compromise and trap Jacqueline into marriage. Jacqueline came so to dread her father's return from the office that she was seized with a nervous trembling every time she heard his approaching footstep or his voice asking for her. They scarcely ever sat through a meal without Jacqueline leaving the table in tears. She grew thin, almost to haggardness, and her aunts drove her nearly wild suggesting tonics or a change of air. Even her Cousin Julia wanted her to go with her for a little trip, but Jacqueline steadily refused. "I'm all right," she said. "And I can't leave just yet."

One evening as she and her father were at dinner she was called to the telephone.

"Hello," said Kent's voice. "I just got in. How soon and where can I see you?"

A half hour afterward Jacqueline slipped from the side door and ran as fast as she could to the Markams' front porch and straight into Kent's arms.

"Oh, Kent, I'm so glad . . . so glad. I wanted you so. I thought I'd die if you didn't come."

"I know . . . my girl . . . my dearest."

"How did you know? You couldn't know."

"Well, I got an idea from your letters that something was wrong and I came up to see what it was."

"I didn't mean you to know . . . I tried so hard to write cheerfully."

"Is it your father?"

"Oh, he's been so unkind . . . says such terrible things. And his sneers . . . sometimes I feel I cannot bear it."

"You don't have to bear it. We'll get married in the morning and I'll take you back to Weston with me."

Jacqueline gave a little joyful laugh and clung the closer. With Kent's arms about her her troubles had vanished like soap bubbles. "You *are* such a lamb, Kent, and I do love you so. If I can just see you once in a while, I'll be all right."

"Look here, Jacqueline, every time I've mentioned marriage you've sheered off. Are you afraid . . . don't you really want to marry me?"

"Of course I want to marry you . . . silly."

"Well, then . . . why do you always put me off? I wrote you that Hatton and Hatton thought they could find a place for me before long and you never even referred to it."

"Kent, dearest, I'd give ten years of my life to marry you to-morrow morning, but I mustn't. You *must* go to Europe first. I'll marry you as soon after you graduate as you wish . . . even if we have to live in a tenement."

"So that's it. Has my mother been at you?"

"She thinks the same way I do . . . that you are to carry out your first plans. She's so proud of you, Kent . . . and anxious for you to go on while you can."

"I might have known. I'll have it out with her tonight. And if you say any more on the subject, I'll turn you across my knee and spank you."

"My goodness, what a bully it is! It's a good thing I'm finding you out."

Kent, still holding her close to him with one arm, tilted back her face until he could look into her eyes. "Now listen to what I'm saying, for I'm not going to repeat it again. I am *not* going to Paris without you. I am *not* going to wait any longer than June to marry you. Nothing you can say or do will persuade me to change my mind. If you look me in the face and tell me you don't love me, I'll leave you alone, but if you can't do that you might as well make up your mind right now to have me on your hands . . . permanently."

"But, darling . . . it would only mean waiting a little longer . . . and I'd write to you every day."

"Do you think I'd go off very far and leave you with your father?"

"But I'm not going to stay with Father . . . I'm going to New York."

"What would you do in New York?"

"I'll get something to do . . . I told you all my plans once. You remember?"

"I remember you had some wild idea of going to New York and making your own living. Is that it?"

"Yes. I have friends there . . . girls from my class in college."

"And you'd have to live on what you earned?"

"Yes . . . but lots of girls do."

Kent kissed her and laughed. "Well, that settles it. Would June first suit you for the wedding? . . . though I still think to-morrow morning would be better."

Kent refused to discuss the matter further, kissed Jacqueline every time she opened her mouth to argue. They went inside presently to greet Mr. and Mrs. Markam, but when after a few minutes Mrs. Markam rose to go upstairs, Kent stopped her.

"Mrs. Markam, things can't go on much longer as they are. Jacqueline can't stand it. I'll take her on any terms, but I'm not crazy about marrying a nervous wreck. I want her to marry me to-morrow morning, but if she insists I *will* wait until the first of June."

"But, Kent . . . Jacqueline has set her heart on your studying abroad. You've worked so hard to make that possible it seems foolish to all of us for you to give it up."

In the lively argument that followed nothing made the slightest impression upon Kent until Mr. Markam asked, "Has Jacqueline told you that if she marries you now, her father has promised definitely to disinherit her? He is almost seventy years old and worth more than half a million dollars."

"Mr. Burrell told me that and it's all right as far as I am concerned. I'm afraid I haven't thought much of Jacqueline's side of it. It's up to her to decide whether I am worth that much to her."

Jacqueline glanced up at Kent and saw him watching her, a little anxiously but still expectantly. Compared to Kent, Jacqueline cared little or nothing for any amount of money. Moreover, in her present mood she felt she never wanted to take another cent from her father. She was on the point of saying that if he would give her what her mother had left her, he could throw his own money in the river for all she cared, when she realized that here at last was the one argument that might shake Kent in his determination not to go to Paris.

"Cousin Henry . . . do you think that if we put off our marriage two or three years, Father might change his mind?"

"I think there's a very good chance of it."

"Then I think it might be better to wait. It would pay us at the rate of almost two hundred thousand dollars a year."

All the life went out of Kent's face. "Just as you say."

Jacqueline rose. "Cousin Julia, I promised Simon I would bring Kent to call on him the very first time he came back. It isn't very late and Simon is wild to see him."

They went together out into the warm scented darkness. Jacqueline was all in white, a soft embroidered shawl about her shoulders. Kent did not speak . . . did not draw close to her. She could no longer bear it.

"Kent . . . you don't trust me?"

"There's no question of trusting or mistrusting. I simply overestimated my own attractions."

"If I promise positively to marry you in two years . . . will that make any difference?"

"If I go abroad, it won't be a question of waiting two years but five or six. And that means we probably never will marry."

"Kent, if you'll go to Paris and you want me to, I'll marry you secretly before you go."

"I don't care to be married secretly. And I don't want your father supporting my wife. If I ever have a wife, I expect to hang around and take care of her myself."

"Kent, stop being an utter idiot. You know I care more for you than for all the money in the world. I'm only trying to do what is best for both of us."

They made it up, clinging together in the darkness. Jacqueline found it necessary to assure Kent over and over that she did love him and that never, never, never would she let anything come between them. Kent seemed to have lost a certain buoyant self-confidence. He no longer laid down the law to her, saying what he would or would not do. Jacqueline was convinced that if she held out long enough he would consent ultimately to go on with his studies.

"But let's not decide now," she said. "Let's think it over a little longer."

They stood presently hand in hand by Simon's bed. "Simon, here's Kent. I've told him you're the one I love best in the world next to him."

Kent held out his hand. "She's also told me I have to get your approval if I know what's good for me."

Simon regarded the young man steadily for a long half minute with his sharp penetrating old eyes. Then he shook hands gravely. "She's a sly one," he said, "but I reckon you can handle her ef ennyone kin."

"I'll do my best," answered Kent. Jacqueline gave a long sigh of relief. Simon approved of Kent. He had given his consent. She slipped away for a minute to speak to Stella, Simon's wife, and when she came back Kent was seated on the foot of the bed swapping war yarns with Simon and Simon was laughing as she had not heard him laugh in years. A little later, when they were saying good-by, Simon asked Jacqueline to send her father to see him. "Tell him it's important," commanded Simon. "I want he should come to-morrow afternoon."

"Simon, if it's about Kent and me there's no use talking to him. Cousin Henry tried and he only made things worse. The best thing we can do for the present is to wait and let him alone."

"I'm too ole to have much time left over for waitin'," said Simon firmly. "You do whut I tell you and send him erlong."

The next morning Jacqueline got up for breakfast in order to deliver Simon's message to her father. It proved an eventful day.

"What does he want to see me about?" demanded Mr. Burrell gruffly. He was in a vicious humor because he knew Jacqueline had spent the previous evening with her lover.

"I don't know, Father, but Simon said it was important. He wants me to let him know what time you can come."

"I suppose if I don't go, the old fool will get a wheel chair and come up here. Tell him I'll try to get there about five."

Shortly after breakfast Mrs. Allen telephoned, asking

Jacqueline to come and see her. Jacqueline gathered a great armful of spring flowers and went about ten o'clock. She had never been inside the Allen house and found it comfortable enough, a radio, a canary, but rather bare and ugly. She wondered whether Kent, with his love of beauty, did not shudder every time he entered it or whether he was so used to the familiar surroundings he scarcely noticed them.

"I have sent for you, Jacqueline, to tell you I am sorry I ever tried to persuade you to put off your marriage to Kent. I can see now it was a mistake."

"I tried not to tell him, Mrs. Allen, but he asked me right out. I am not good at concealing things."

"I never meant you to conceal it. I would have told him myself if I had had an opportunity."

"Mrs. Allen . . . you haven't really changed your mind? You still think it would be best for him to go to Paris?"

"I hardly know what I think. I never saw Kent more upset in his life than he was last night. And I do know this—Kent is twenty-six years old and has the right to decide what is best for him. He probably knows better than I do. Parents have no right to interfere beyond a certain point in their children's lives. I've already meddled too much."

"He's your son, Mrs. Allen, and naturally you want him to succeed. And I do too. I am doing my best to persuade him to go on and try for the Beaux Arts. But it isn't very easy . . . because I don't want him to go any more than he wants to."

"You're a fine brave girl, Jacqueline. I am beginning

to be grateful that Kent loves you and you love him."

There were tears in both their eyes when Jacqueline went over to Mrs. Allen and kissed her. Afterwards they talked of Jacqueline's mother and what a kind neighbor she always had been during illness or trouble in the Allen household. Jacqueline left feeling comforted and less alone. Her cousins the Markams were leaving that evening for two weeks in New York and Jacqueline spent the afternoon helping her Cousin Julia pack. When she got home rather late she found her father had not yet returned from his interview with Simon, which was rather surprising as he usually made a point of sitting down at the dinner table at exactly six-thirty. At seven he had not yet come and Sheeby, who saw her dinner spoiling, was grumbling and cross. At seven-fifteen Jacqueline heard the side door slam and hastened into the hall.

"Why, Father," she cried, "what has happened?"

Mr. Burrell stood there in the middle of the hall, swaying slightly like a drunken man. He was a ghastly color . . . and his clothes seemed to hang on him as if he had shrunken. His lips twitched and his eyes were dreadful. "Why, Father," repeated Jacqueline . . . "You are ill . . . I must get Dr. Robert."

She made a motion toward the telephone, but Mr. Burrell stopped her. "You . . . you . . ." he said hoarsely. "You . . . put that damned nigger up to . . . up to . . . it. It was you . . . and your carpenter . . ."

Jacqueline was standing close to her father but instinctively she drew back a foot or two. Often before she had faced his angry glare, but never had he looked at her with hatred in his eyes . . . and something else. Was it

fear? Was it shame? "Father, what *do* you mean? What *is* it?"

He gripped her arm and held it until she cried aloud with the pain.

"You don't know . . . ? Simon . . . didn't . . . didn't . . . ?"

"I haven't the slightest idea what you are talking about."

He dropped her arm, turned and went into the library and Jacqueline heard the key turned in the lock. But a moment later the door was unlocked and flung open. "I forbid you . . . I forbid you ever to see or speak to Simon again. If you disobey me, you can leave this house and never come back. Do you hear me? Why don't you answer me? Don't you understand?"

"No, I don't understand . . . and I don't know what to say. Simon . . . you know how fond I am of Simon."

"I forbid you . . . I forbid you . . ." He was like a man distraught. Jacqueline tried to soothe him. "I must think this over, Father. Anyway I won't see him this evening. Won't you let me get you some dinner?"

"No." He slammed the door shut and again locked it. During the evening, although she and Sheeby tapped on it half a dozen times, he never answered. At midnight Jacqueline heard his dragging footsteps coming slowly up the stairs. She got hastily out of bed. "Father, are you all right? Can I do anything?"

He brushed by her without answering. In his room Sheeby had left strong hot chicken broth in a thermos bottle, fruit and sandwiches. There seemed nothing more to do and Jacqueline fell finally into a troubled doze.

She dreamed of Simon . . . that Simon was calling for her and her father was keeping her from going to him. Simon kept pleading. "Jac'line, Mis' Jac'line." Only Simon never called her that . . . it was always Baby or Honey. No, it wasn't Simon. It was some one else. Jacqueline struggled into consciousness and realized that there really was some one underneath her window, calling her. It proved to be Stella.

"Mis' Jac'line, Simon's bin took bad. I can't get nobody woke up. Will you telephone for the doctor?"

"Yes . . . and I'll come right away."

Ten minutes later, in dressing gown and slippers, she stood by Simon's bed. He lay like a dead thing. Stella had been sent away during his interview with Mr. Burrell and she could tell Jacqueline nothing except that on her return Simon seemed terribly upset. However, when she settled him for the night he was reasonably calm, but she had wakened in the early morning to find him like this. When Dr. Robert arrived he gave them very little hope that Simon would ever regain consciousness. It was possible, of course, but improbable. The end was likely to come at any moment.

An hour later Jacqueline went back to the house to dress. Her father's door was open. He must have gone to the bathroom and noticed her empty bed. He called her. "Where have you been?"

"Stella came for me . . . Simon has had another stroke. Dr. Robert says he may . . . die any minute."

"Is he conscious?"

"Oh, no."

Jacqueline, watching her father anxiously, fearful that

he might fulfill his threat and order her out of the house, was surprised at the look that flashed over his face. It was unmistakably relief . . . relief and a kind of fierce joy. He suddenly looked less ghastly . . . his eyes were no longer dreadful. A little color came into his lips. "I am not surprised," he said. "Simon was out of his head last night . . . utterly crazy."

"Father . . . I have to go and see Simon. It is impossible for me to stay away from him when he is dying."

"I suppose as usual you'll do as you please."

Jacqueline had time to bathe, dress and made another visit to Simon before breakfast was ready. Her father joined her at the table, and ate hungrily. He appeared older, a little shrunken, but he often looked that way after a sleepless night. Before leaving for the office he himself went to see Simon and told Stella she was to order anything she wanted at the stores and charge it to him.

"I think we had better get a nurse," said Jacqueline.

"Nonsense. A nurse would only be in the way," said her father.

Stella agreed she could do all that was necessary with Boley's help, and Boley was ordered to sleep at Simon's and stay within call. Jacqueline spent a long dreary day wandering from the big house to the little house and back again. She would have given anything if her Cousin Julia had been there. Sarah came, later both her aunts bringing flowers and broths and jellies, but there was nothing any one could do. Towards evening they were able to rouse Simon enough to give him a little milk.

Occasionally he spoke, but he knew none of them. The next day was much the same. The following day he took Jacqueline for her grandmother and called her Mis' Laura. "Where's Mis' Laura went?" he asked Stella, and seemed relieved when Jacqueline came back and sat with his hand in hers. Sometimes he babbled for hours of things and people they had never seen . . . often of his beloved Mars' Tom who had been dead over sixty years. He was no better and no worse, the doctor said, and only the vigor of his splendid constitution kept him alive.

Jacqueline spent a great deal of time with Simon . . . was never long away from him. She was very unhappy . . . miserably lonely and depressed. For a few days her father had been unnaturally subdued and quiet, but gradually his old arrogance and masterfulness were asserting themselves. Once more he began to nag her . . . to sneer at her carpenter lover and his family. Jacqueline often wondered, of course, what Simon could have said to her father to so terribly upset him. She decided that it must have had to do with her mother's money. What else on earth could it have been? Whatever it was her father had been horribly frightened lest she find it out and had tried stupidly to keep her away from Simon. Perhaps Simon knew of a promise her father had made to her mother and never fulfilled. Perhaps he had learned of a later will. She was certain Simon had tried to use whatever knowledge he had to force her father into consenting to her marriage with Kent. Hadn't he said to her he would talk to her father . . . that "mebbe there was a chanct" he could do something? If

Simon could only tell her . . . if she could find out what he had said to her father! But there was no use fretting about it, she supposed. With Simon lying at death's door how could she think of anything but him? Dear Simon, how much she loved him. How good he had always been to her . . . both father and mother to her since her mother died. How barren and dreary her life would have been without him. What a richness he had brought into it . . . what a wealth of affection and picturesqueness! There never had been, there never would be such a story teller. And he liked Kent! It had never taken Simon long to make up his mind whom he liked or disliked, though nothing under heaven could persuade him to pretend either way. It would have shaken her terribly if Simon had not approved of Kent. But of course she had never doubted but that he would. Simon had a sure instinct for judging people.

Jacqueline had a great deal of time for thought those days and she found herself dwelling more and more on the injustice and unkindness of her father in withholding from her the money she felt was rightfully hers. When she thought of what that thirty thousand from her mother would mean to her and Kent she was swept by such gusts of rage she was tempted to walk straight out of her father's house and never enter it again. But for Kent's sake she must not. If she had it to do over again she would never let Kent know how unhappy she was at home. She believed it was partly for that reason, perhaps largely for that reason, that Kent was so anxious to marry her and take her away. There was never a question in Jacqueline's mind that she might ever care

for any one but Kent Allen. The surety and certainty that she loved Kent . . . would always love him . . . that had come to her so suddenly the evening her father first learned of their meetings, had never left her. She was positive that if anything happened to prevent their marriage that all life's most exquisite promises would remain for her forever unfulfilled. It was because she loved Kent so much that she passionately longed to do what was best for him. She wanted, she desperately wanted him to succeed, partly of course for herself . . . to justify her faith in him . . . but largely for his own sake. He believed so firmly in himself . . . it would be terrible if anything happened to shake his faith in himself. He thought if he could get taken into the Beaux Arts that he could graduate in two years or a little longer. Then two, three, perhaps four years more to establish himself. That made six years she might have to wait if Kent left her now and went to Paris.

So much could happen in six years. For one thing their first youth would go . . . and more even than success Jacqueline wanted to be young with Kent. What could compensate them for losing six years of their youth together? A thousand times she was on the verge of writing her lover that she was ready to marry him June first or sooner, but always a dread of standing in his way, a fear that he might some day bitterly regret his lost opportunities, held her back. But she made up her mind she would never again urge Kent to put the ocean between them. As his mother had said, Kent had the right to decide what was best for him and she would now leave the deciding to him. Already she had said every-

thing she could think of in favor of postponing their marriage. If Kent determined to go on with his studies, she would never let him see her disappointment. What Kent had decided about Paris she did not know, but he no longer urged her to an immediate marriage.

"I can see now," he had written, "that I was a conceited young fool to insist that you give up so much for me before I had anything definite to offer you . . . not even a white collar job." Kent's letters were no longer spontaneous boyish outpourings, ornamented with lively drawings. It seemed a different, a more mature and grown-up Kent who now wrote to her. But Jacqueline longed for the younger, less hesitating Kent with whom she had fallen in love. It was his joyous self-confidence that had first attracted her. She thought he had changed because she had appeared unwilling to give up for him the chance of inheriting a half million dollars. It never occurred to her that he also might be jealous of Dr. Whittemore's continued visits and was too proud to say so. Neither did she guess that the general criticism of their engagement, which had so hurt and enraged her, had reached Kent through his family and not only hurt but humiliated him. She only knew that Kent seemed to have drawn a little away from her and that she seemed unable to reach him and bring him closer.

A week passed and there was little change in Simon's condition. There had been a period of cold weather that checked the spring's advance, but suddenly it turned warm and everything was in full bloom. One afternoon she sat idly by Simon's bed, more unhappy than she had ever been in her life. Kent had not written for three

days and in his last letter he had said he was so rushed he saw no chance of getting off to see her. That morning and the previous evening her father had been particularly trying. He had wanted her to go to California with her Aunt Sally and was enraged at her persistent refusal. It was very quiet in Simon's room. Across the little passageway she could hear Stella moving about her kitchen, humming softly. Outside the open window a pear tree was in bloom and its fragrance filled the low-ceilinged bedroom. Occasionally a little wandering breeze brought in a tiny white petal to drift across Simon's bed. One fell lightly on his hand . . . then another. Simon had always loved that pear tree . . . had planted it himself. Now he did not know it was in blossom . . . would never know again. Jacqueline put her head down on the red and white blocked quilt and her tears came. Simon began to say something . . . she hardly knew what, but she raised her head and began to listen when she realized he was talking about her grandmother.

"The pear tree over at the North Fork by the preacher's house were drappin', drappin' jest like snow the mornin' Mis' Laura rid over to git marriedt. Seems like I never smell a pear tree in bloom but whut it all comes back. I had to stay outside and hold the horses. Mis' Laura were ridin' Kitty and Kitty were mighty skittish that day . . . 'peared like she knowed whut were goin' on. But I stood me by the open window and was as clost to 'em as ef I'd bin in the room. Mis' Laura let on as how I stood up with her . . . and that the pear tree were her bridal veil."

Jacqueline's heart began to thump . . . she scarcely knew why. It seemed queer her grandmother had ridden to her wedding on horseback. And what did Simon mean by the preacher's house and looking into the room? Her grandmother certainly had been married in an Episcopal church . . . her Aunt Nancy had a framed picture of the old church hanging in her guest room. But if Simon were conscious of the fragrance of the pear blooms perhaps . . . perhaps . . .

"But wasn't Grandmother married in church?" she ventured.

Simon did not answer, seemed for three or four minutes to be asleep. Then he said quite clearly, "The preacher's name was Simmons. He were a Adventist. He moved away to Oregon shortly after the court house burned. That's how it begun . . . that's how it all begun."

It seemed to Jacqueline that her aunts or Simon or some one had told her long ago that her grandmother's wedding had been in the wintertime. She remembered now . . . it was Simon who had told her. "Simon," she coaxed, "don't you remember the big snow at Mis' Laura's wedding . . . how hard you all had to work to clear the road to the church?"

"There weren't no snow the day Mis' Laura rid to the North Fork and marriedt young Mars' Martin Richards," said Simon irritably. "The pear tree were in bloom. Mars' Martin broke off a piece and put it in her hat. Mis' Laura made out all the way home that it were her wedding veil."

CHAPTER XXI

JACQUELINE sat opposite her father at the dinner table and scarcely heard a word he said to her.

"I asked you twice," snapped her father, "whether the plumber had been here to fix that leak in the bathroom?"

"I beg your pardon. The leak was mended so I presume he came. I was with Simon most of the day."

"I thought," sneered her father, "you would have been on hand to receive him . . . since your taste seems to run to plumbers . . . and plumber's brothers."

Martin, Martin!! That was the name signed to the love letter she had found in the lining of the little old trunk her grandmother had brought from Virginia. "Yes," she said absently to her father, unconscious for once of his gibe. If Grandmother had run away and married a man named Martin . . . Martin Richards . . . then she must have been a widow when she married Grandfather. But why had it been kept so secret? She was certain neither her aunts nor her father knew their mother had been married twice. But wait! *Did* her father know it? Was *that* what Simon had told him? But there was no particular shame or disgrace in a previous marriage . . . even in a secret runaway marriage. Just the knowledge that his mother had been married before would not have scared her father half out of his wits. She thought of her father's face that evening after

his last talk with Simon. He certainly had been terribly frightened . . . panicky. He had never seemed quite the same since . . . was nervous, easily startled. *What was* it Simon could have said to him? If Simon had only told her a little more to-day . . . if only that hound hadn't bayed in the alley and started him rambling on about a fox hunt, she might have found out what she so dreadfully wanted to know. But she would go back the first thing in the morning. She would pile Simon's bed with pear blossoms. She would . . .

"If it's not asking too much, I should like to have a little of your valuable attention," said her father sarcastically. "Mr. Wolf has offered to let me have his camp in Wisconsin for the summer and your Aunt Nancy is willing to go there and stay with you. I can be with you only part of the time, but your aunt thought it would be pleasant for you to have some house parties . . . have your school friends visit you."

"I can't make any plans for the summer just yet, Father. Perhaps I'll know in three or four weeks."

"Depending, I suppose, on when your carpenter finishes his pig sty . . . or whatever it is he is building?"

"Depending entirely on what Kent decides when he comes back."

She was certain now that she had been mistaken in jumping to the conclusion that what Simon had told her father concerned her mother or the money she had left. No . . . it was something about her grandmother. Only a few days ago she had missed that framed photograph of her grandmother that had stood for years on her father's desk. When she asked where it was he told her

the glass was broken and fairly snapped her head off when she offered to have it replaced . . . said he believed he was still capable of attending to his own affairs. She'd find out this evening whether or not that glass was broken. And if it were not . . .

"I suppose you realize that the Wolf camp is not offered to everybody and that I have to decide about it this week."

"If you and Aunt Nancy would enjoy it, why not take it? I think you'd better count me out in your summer plans."

"Of all the ungrateful . . . I heard you say once that it was the dream of your life to spend a summer in the Wolf camp, and when I offer to make that possible you haven't even the decency to tell me whether you will or will not go."

"I'm sorry, Father. It's a heavenly place and if Kent decides to go to Europe, I'll probably be glad to spend the summer there with Aunt Nancy."

She was relieved when her father did not ask her what she intended to do in case Kent decided to the contrary. So far her father had avoided a discussion of any but her immediate future and she hoped he would continue to do so until her plans were more definite.

But what had become of Martin? Did he die? Had there been a divorce? Did they have divorces seventy-five or eighty years ago? She doubted it . . . certainly not easy secret divorces. Jacqueline was positive that if there had been a divorce she would have learned of it. So Martin must have died. Perhaps he died before any one found out about the marriage so Grandmother went

on keeping it secret. Simon knew, of course, but Simon would never tell. Was that why her grandmother had been so sad all her life? Grandmother may have loved this Martin as she herself loved Kent. If Kent died, would she be sad all her life like her grandmother? Well, she was sure of one thing. If she married Kent secretly and he died, she would never go on concealing her love for him and marry another man before her young husband was cold in the grave. Grandmother had married Grandfather when she was barely nineteen so she couldn't have waited very long to mourn.

On the surface Grandmother had had a happy and successful life . . . a devoted husband, children, grandchildren, plenty of money and friends. Yet she must have cared terribly for this Martin to have grieved for him for almost sixty years. According to Simon she had married Martin when she was a gay, high spirited girl in her teens. She had died a sad old lady of seventy-five. Jacqueline decided her grandmother must have married her grandfather when she was almost wild with unhappiness, hoping the change to new scenes would make her forget. But they hadn't. None of her children had ever heard her laugh. Or sadder still, seen her cry. Looking back, Jacqueline saw her grandmother as a statue woman, lacking the usual everyday warming emotions. Even as a child Jacqueline had realized her grandmother never really had cared for any of them . . . except Simon. Jacqueline believed she had cared for Simon. Was it because Simon belonged to her grandmother's happy girlhood days . . . before she had frozen up inside?

Would just losing her young husband do that to her? Would her grief for him last so long? To have some one you loved die was a terrible thing, but people got over it. Jacqueline herself had suffered horribly when her mother died. She still loved her mother, liked to think of her, often and often longed for her, but the loss of her mother no longer made her unhappy. There were, of course, more dreadful things . . . things harder to bear than death. Shame, for instance . . . or dishonor . . . or to lose faith in one you loved. If Kent died, it would be agony. Life would never be the same for her . . . but she supposed she would get over it in time. Other women did . . . and she would always have her memories. But suppose Kent did something dishonorable . . . stole money . . . carried on a low vulgar affair with some girl in Weston all the while he was making love to her? It wasn't possible of course . . . but just suppose! A thing like that would hurt her a thousand times more than Kent's death. To lose her faith in Kent . . .

"Why do you look at me like that?" demanded Mr. Burrell irritably.

"I don't know. I was just thinking."

Jacqueline waited until her father had finished his dinner, smoked a cigar and gone into the kitchen for his usual evening chat with Sheeby and then hurried into the library. In the bottom drawer of her father's desk she found the photograph of her grandmother with the glass unbroken and the frame intact, shoved face down under some papers. Now she *knew* that what Simon had told him concerned her grandmother. He no longer wanted to

be reminded of his mother. He always had been so proud of her. Why had he put her picture away? What *could* Simon have told him?

It scarcely occurred to Jacqueline to doubt the truth of Simon's statement about her grandmother's marriage to Martin Richards. Always she had known there was a mystery about her grandmother . . . a secret that only Simon shared. Moreover there was that love letter to her grandmother signed Martin . . . the letter in which Martin had called her grandmother his darling Laura, his bride. She remembered that Martin had written he would be waiting that evening in the usual place . . . would wait until midnight. So Grandmother must have met him secretly at night. Her own father had been furious . . . had insinuated unthinkable things . . . because she had met Kent secretly in broad daylight. What would he have said if she had stolen out to meet him at night? But of course if Grandmother had been married to Martin, no one could criticize her for meeting him at any time she chose. Simon had told her a thousand times of Great-grandfather Digges' fiery temper and unreasonableness. They accounted easily enough for the secret wedding, but Jacqueline wondered whether Great-grandmother Digges knew about it. Probably not. Great-grandmother had been an invalid and had spent the latter years of her life in her room. Probably no one knew of the marriage except Simon and the preacher who married them and moved away with his family, Simon had said, shortly after the court house burned. Did that mean the records of the marriage had been destroyed? Probably. That was why it had been so easy for Grandmother to keep her first wedding secret all her life.

But all this did not account for her grandmother's lasting unhappiness or her father's fright after his last interview with Simon. Martin might have been dishonorable or unfaithful and her grandmother have found it out. Martin might even have committed suicide. A ghastly thing like that might make a highly sensitive woman unhappy all her life. But knowledge of that wouldn't frighten her father. It was what Simon had told her father that Jacqueline most wanted to know. There was one thought that kept hopping into Jacqueline's mind, though she persisted in dismissing it as impossible. It just wasn't *possible* that Martin hadn't died. Her grandmother just *couldn't* have married her grandfather if Martin hadn't died. He might have gone away . . . after a quarrel . . . and Grandmother thought him dead when he wasn't. Like Enoch Arden. That thought was terrible enough to frighten anybody. It frightened even her. Why, that would make her father and her aunts illegitimate. Her own name wouldn't be Burrell. What would it be . . . Richards? Would she have a name? Such an idea was fantastic . . . absurd . . . out of the question. But why had her father taken that photograph of his mother as a girl, copied from an old daguerreotype, which he had cherished for years, off his desk and shoved it face downward in a seldom used drawer? Why had his face looked so ghastly the evening he came from his last interview with Simon? Why had he been relieved . . . yes, and glad . . . when he learned that Simon had had a stroke and probably would never be conscious again?

Jacqueline whistled for Mike who came bounding and barking with joy. She had rather neglected Mike these last few days since Simon's illness, but Mike was a for-

giving soul and always willing to let bygones be bygones and start afresh. They tramped back and forth under the stars for an hour and then went for a last good night look at Simon.

"He's bin talkin' all evenin' to your Uncle Tom," said Stella. "It sure gives me the creeps. A body might think Uncle Tom were right here in the room answerin' him back."

"He hasn't said anything about my Grandmother . . . Miss Laura?"

"No'm. It's all kind of man talk."

"Would you like me to stay with you?"

"No'm . . . there ain't nothin' you could do. And Boley will be here enny minute to take turns settin' up with him."

Jacqueline found she was very tired and slept heavily, but her dreams were troubled and she was vaguely conscious when she wakened of having heard a dog howl mournfully in the night. Her thoughts turned at once to her grandmother and this Martin she had run away and married and she determined to go straight to Simon and stay with him all that day. He *must* tell her more about her grandmother. She *must* find out what had become of Martin. Perhaps if she put on one of her grandmother's old dresses, went to Simon with her arms full of pear blossoms pretending she was Miss Laura . . . he would tell her what she so terribly wanted to know.

But as she put her foot out of bed to hurry to Simon, Hallie tapped on her door to tell her there was no need for haste. Stella had just sent word by Boley that Simon had died quietly in his sleep without regaining consciousness.

CHAPTER XXII

COUSIN JULIA and Cousin Henry got back the morning of Simon's funeral and three days later Kent called Jacqueline at noon to tell her he would arrive in New Concord about six to spend the evening with her. Jacqueline met him at the train and drove him home, followed by a trail of curious glances.

"Kent, Cousin Julia has invited us to have dinner at her house. Will your mother mind?"

"She doesn't even know yet I'm in town. What time shall I come?"

"Seven."

At seven Jacqueline, in a white dress, waited alone in the Markam living room and at seven exactly Kent rang the front door bell. At ten minutes past Cora announced dinner.

"But where are the Markams."

"Those two angels have gone downtown to the hotel. Cousin Julia had to fairly drag Cousin Henry by the coat tails . . . but he went."

They sat opposite one another at a polished mahogany table. White damask, gleaming silver, yellow tulips in a pale amber bowl . . . and the scent of lilacs from the open window. Cora brought in the soup. Kent tasted it, pushed it back, went and knelt by Jacqueline's side.

"Jacqueline . . . I want you."

"Well, you've got me, haven't you?"

"Have I? I don't know."

"Of course you have . . . silly dearest."

"Do I have to sit way over there?"

"Not unless you want to."

Cora came in to find them side by side, chairs as close as two chairs could be. They had eaten the soup because Jacqueline had insisted that Cora's feelings would be hurt if they didn't. . . . Cora had worked all afternoon over her dinner. They ate the delicious fried chicken for the same reason, the tender green asparagus, the crisp salad, the fresh strawberry ice cream. They would have eaten dried bread and lentils and thought them ambrosia. Just to be together . . . to sit side by side at the same table . . .

Afterwards they sat even closer on the big living-room couch.

"Jacqueline . . . I was in Kansas City last week. I've brought you something." He handed her a little square gray and silver box.

"Oh, Kent . . . my engagement ring!" It was a small circlet of diamonds.

"The one I wanted to get you cost two thousand dollars. I thought we'd make this do until we had two thousand dollars to spare."

"Make it do. . . ? But this is beautiful. I'll never want another."

"You like it?"

"I adore it . . . You put it on for me."

He did as he was told, kissing her hand, her cheek, her mouth.

"But how did you know the right size?"

"You made yourself a ring one Sunday afternoon out

of pink string. I kept it . . . because I had nothing else of yours."

He drew out another small box of gray and silver. "But you haven't bought me *two* engagement rings?" protested Jacqueline.

"No." He opened the box. Inside was a narrow chased platinum wedding ring.

"I thought I might as well get this while I was at it . . . thought it might possibly come in handy . . . sometime."

Jacqueline was afraid to trust herself to speak . . . afraid she might tell Kent how much she wanted him to insist that he was going to wait but a few weeks longer to put that wedding ring on her finger. But when she said nothing Kent got up, lit a cigarette, wandered about the room.

"I'll be through my present job in three weeks or a little over," he said presently. "I thought you might like to tell your friends that after this month I'll be out of overalls . . . probably for good. No longer a carpenter."

There was something in his tone that made Jacqueline look up sharply.

"Kent, dear, do you think that makes any difference to me?"

"I thought it might."

"Well, in a way you're right. Naturally I don't want you to be a carpenter all your life. But I'm afraid I haven't told you how proud I am of your . . . well, of your overalls. Or how sick and tired I am of the silly, narrow white collared viewpoint."

He came and stood over her, looking down at her. "Sure?" he asked.

"Surest thing in the world."

He was suddenly contrite, noticing how tired and wan she looked.

"My girl . . . my darling." Jacqueline had forgotten there was such tenderness in the world as Kent showed that night. All the pain and grief, the loneliness, the fears of the past weeks, she cried away on her lover's shoulder. Jacqueline was too tired to talk . . . too tired to tell Kent of what Simon had said in his delirium about her grandmother . . . too tired to worry about the future . . . too tired to feel or think of anything but the blessed comfort of Kent's strong young arms.

Before Kent left her he told her he was waiting to talk with the senior Mr. Hatton of Hatton and Hatton, architects, before he decided definitely on his next step. Mr. Hatton, who was on his way home from Europe, was expected in Kansas City almost any day and Kent had a letter to him from one of his professors.

"They've practically promised me a place in the office, but I want to talk to the old man first . . . find out what he thinks of the prospects in Kansas City for a rising young architect with a wife to support . . . and what he says about going abroad. Mr. Hatton's a Beaux Arts man himself and a prince from all reports."

Kent wrote every day, thereafter, and Jacqueline was a little less forlorn than she had been although still very lonely and sad. She had drawn away from her aunts and most of her friends because of their opposition to her engagement, her Cousin Julia was very busy with a

dressmaker in the house, and now that Simon was gone she often felt she had no one at hand to love or who loved her except Mike. Her father was no easier to live with . . . he resented bitterly and openly the small circle of diamonds on her left hand. Jacqueline saw as little of him as possible . . . spent most of her evenings alone or at the Markams'. One afternoon, happening to go into the library, she found her grandmother's photograph once more re-instated in its place of honor on her father's desk. So with Simon dead, her father was no longer afraid to be reminded of his mother. It had always been easy for him to convince himself of the truth or untruth of anything he wanted to believe or disbelieve . . . undoubtedly he already had persuaded himself that whatever Simon had said to him in that last interview had been untrue.

Having little else to occupy her, Jacqueline once more began to think of her grandmother's hidden love affair and to wonder whether she ever would find out what had become of Martin Richards or the reason for her grandmother's sadness. Again Jacqueline went through the little old trunk from Virginia, searched patiently through an old desk and bureau that had been her grandmother's, went through every old box or bundle in the attic . . . but all without results. But one day at her Aunt Nancy's . . . where her grandmother had died . . . she made an important discovery. She had gone to see her aunt to ask about her grandmother and her wedding to her grandfather and Aunt Nancy, delighted to talk of old times, brought out an ancient scrapbook full to bursting of faded clippings, dance programs, announcements of

deaths, births and the like that had been her mother's. In the front of the book was an account of the wedding of Miss Laura Digges and Mr. John Taliaferro Burrell, in the Church of the Ascension in Pleasantville, Virginia, on the twenty-third day of January in the year of our Lord, 1859. It was a long account, more than a column, with many flowery references to the beauty of the bride and the prominence of both the contracting parties to an alliance that "united in an indissoluble bond two of the oldest and most distinguished families in the great commonwealth of Virginia." The paper was so brittle and faded, torn in several places, and set with the old-fashioned type that used f for s, that Jacqueline had great difficulty in making it out. But at the end, among a long list of wedding guests, was the name of Martin Richards.

So Martin had been at her grandmother's wedding! He had stood in church and seen her, "his darling Laura," married. Loving her . . . certainly he had loved her . . . he had seen her married to a man ten years her senior, a man whom he must have known she did not love. Jacqueline felt herself thoroughly mystified. Surely, surely Martin would never have stood silently and allowed his own wife to be married to another man. So, after all, there could have been no runaway wedding. Simon, of course, had been delirious that last afternoon. It was ridiculous of her to take his statements seriously. If he had not been so positive . . . "The pear tree were drappin' . . . Mis' Laura let on as how I stood up with her and the pear tree were her wedding veil. . . The preacher's name were Simmons. He moved away right shortly

after the court house burned . . . and that's how it begun . . . that's how it all begun."

Jacqueline begged permission to take the bulky book of clippings home with her, and that night she sat up until after one o'clock patiently going through it. She found much in it to interest her, but only one thing of any importance in her quest. It was a fairly recent clipping from a newspaper in Wilmington, Delaware, giving the obituary of Major Martin Richards, prominent lawyer and capitalist, who had died there at the age of three score years and thirteen. Major Richards, after graduating from Harvard in the class of 1857, had taught history and English literature in the Mary Baldwin Seminary for young ladies near Roanoke, Virginia. Owing to his active affiliation with the abolitionists and his intense opposition to the institution of slavery he had left Virginia during the winter of 1859 and returned to Delaware, where he continued to make his home until his death. Major Richards had been among the first to volunteer when President Lincoln declared war and fought through to the end on the Northern side. He had won his commission on the battlefield and was famed for his gallantry and recklessness under fire. Major Richards had been one of the handsomest men of his generation, standing six feet two in his stockinged feet, but had never married. He had left no will and his large estate went to his nieces and nephews. His clubs were, etc.

So Jacqueline knew at last who Martin Richards was. She knew he had not died until 1907, three years after

her grandfather. She knew he had been a brave and reckless man, tall and exceedingly handsome. Grandfather Burrell had been a portly, fussy little man with never a claim to good looks or attractiveness. Grandmother was half a head taller than he . . . and famed all her life for her beauty. Martin must have fallen in love with her while she was a pupil at the Mary Baldwin Seminary. Jacqueline could understand perfectly now the reason for their secret meetings. Her Great-grandfather Digges, her fiery, hot tempered Great-grandfather Digges, who considered the average Northerner as scum poisoning the good earth and regarded abolitionists as cowardly craven Judases, predestined by a just God to eternal hell fire, would never, never have permitted Martin Richards to come to his house . . . much less have accepted him as the suitor for the hand of his favorite daughter. Grandmother too was intensely Southern in all her sympathies. Three-quarters of her life had been spent in Kansas, but to the day of her death she always had referred proudly to herself as a Virginian . . . said she had no other country. And none of her children ever had dared to display the American flag in her presence. How easy it would have been in those days of high feeling just before the Civil War for her grandmother and Martin Richards to quarrel . . . no matter how much they may have loved each other. They were both very young, proud . . . recklessly high spirited. It seemed inevitable that they should quarrel . . . and quarrel bitterly. Nevertheless, if they were married . . . but had they been married? Was Simon quite out of his head? Had he imagined that runaway marriage?

If it had not been for the strange manner in which her father had acted, Jacqueline would have decided that Simon *had* imagined it and stopped thinking more about it, but she was unable to forget her father's unconcealed and very desperate fright the evening after his last talk with Simon, his attempt to keep her away from her old friend, his evident relief when he learned that Simon was unconscious and dying. Simon had certainly told her father something important and what that something was Jacqueline was determined if possible to find out. But how to go about it? What more could she do than she had done? There was no use questioning her father. Simon was dead and Stella had assured her he had never said anything sensible during his last hours. She had searched everywhere she could think of for possible letters or papers of her grandmother's, and found nothing. It seemed she had come at last to a blind wall and would never know any more of her grandmother's secret love affair or whether it had anything to do with her father's fright. She made up her mind finally to stop puzzling over it, to go about more, to occupy herself with more practical matters. Boley for instance. She must do something for Boley. Her father had told him he would not be needed after the first of the month. Stella was to stay on in Simon's cottage and have Simon's pension for life, but Boley was to go. With Jess on the place Boley never had been needed and Mr. Burrell had kept him for years only to please Simon. Jacqueline found another place for Boley easily enough but he refused to be reconciled. He went around with a long and mournful face and looked so abused and miserable that he made

both Jacqueline and her father, though the latter refused to admit it, feel like unmitigated brutes.

"I don't trust Jess to keep this car jest as it should be," Boley said to Jacqueline one afternoon as she and Mike were ready to start for a drive.

"You've kept it beautifully, Boley. I don't think I have ever taken it out of the barn with a speck of dust on it. We are going to miss you dreadfully when you leave."

"Seems like my family's been workin' for your'n so long it ain't exactly right for me to go and Jess to stay on in my place."

"Just as soon as I can afford it after I'm married, I'll send for you to come and work for me. Will you come?"

"Will I? You won't be able to see me movin' for my dust. You won't forget?"

"Of course I won't forget. Having you will be the next best thing to having Simon."

"My Uncle Simon thought a lot of you, Mis' Jac'line."

"And I thought a lot of him. I've always been sorry I did not stay with him that night he died. He was a little brighter that afternoon . . . I know he smelled the pear blossoms outside his window. Stella says not, but I've often wondered whether he might have had a moment of consciousness during those last hours."

"I wouldn't be surprised if he did . . . he looked at me awful knowin' once or twice. Still, he never said anything that made any sense."

"Do you remember what he said . . . whether it was anything about my grandmother?"

"No'm. It were mostly about your Uncle Tom. But once he did speak of you, come to think of it."

"What did he say about me?" asked Jacqueline eagerly.

"Oh, nothin' . . . jest some of his usual wild talk. I was settin' there by his bed about half awake and he looked up at me and said for me to go straight away and tell Mis' Jacqueline not to give up ontell she found them wedding lines. It were such a funny thing to say I had to laugh, but Uncle Simon said it twice over. When I said, all right I'll tell you first thing in the mornin' he shut his eyes and went to sleep. I don't believe he said anything at all after that. Leastwise, next thing I knowed he were dead."

CHAPTER XXIII

JACQUELINE did not go for her ride that afternoon. Instead she returned to the house and made another fruitless search of the attic and everything in it. In the morning, as soon as Hallie had made the beds and gone downstairs, Jacqueline went to the room that had been her grandmother's, now her father's, and with a hammer tapped every board in the floor, wainscoting, the mantelpiece, the large closet and old-fashioned enclosed wash stand. The house had been built during the days of cheap and conscientious labor. There came no hollow sounds to her expectant ears that told of loose boards or panels, which properly manipulated, slid back to reveal a hiding space. After lunch, she went at the heavy walnut furniture . . . lay down on the floor under the bed, searching for a possible secret pocket, moved the heavy dresser, the table, the commode, tipped up the chairs, tapped every fretted scroll and rosette with her hammer. The desk in the upstairs hall that matched the bedroom set she already had examined, but she went through it again . . . tap, tap, tap. Alas, the mid-Victorians who designed that sturdy walnut suite had been as devoid of imagination as of love for simple untortured lines. Jacqueline found no secret drawers or hiding places. Hot, mussed, black from head to toe, she barely had time to make herself presentable before her father got home.

"I believe there's a woodpecker somewheres on the roof," said Hallie as she waited on table. "I heard him peckin', peckin' all afternoon."

Jacqueline was so absorbed she scarcely had given a thought to what Hallie and Sheeby might think of her unusual activities, but she was immediately relieved that they had taken her tapping for that of a woodpecker. But what to do next? She could not tear the house down or the furniture to pieces, and the place was so large she could not go through it inch by inch. Jacqueline was convinced now, more by instinct than reason, that Simon had been fully conscious when he sent her that last message. She was practically certain that her grandmother had married Martin Richards secretly and that there existed somewhere a record of that marriage which Simon had meant her to find and use. "Tell Mis' Jac'line not to give up ontell she finds them wedding lines," he had said. Even with his last breath Simon had been cautious. The message meant nothing to Boley . . . everything to Jacqueline. That Simon had not known where that record was himself, Jacqueline judged, but that certainly was what he had been hunting for that day he braved the cold and climbed alone into the attic and tore the lining of the little old trunk to ribbons. The love letter from Martin had been there under the little pocket exactly where Jacqueline had told him . . . he did not have to tear the lining to find that. How Simon knew that her grandmother had never destroyed her "wedding lines" Jacqueline could not guess. There were many things Simon had known about her grandmother Jacqueline knew she would never find out, but she *did* mean to find that

wedding license if it existed. The only question was where to look next.

The answer, obviously, was at her Aunt Nancy's where her grandmother had spent the last fifteen years of her life. It would be necessary to take one or both of her aunts partly into her confidence and tell them about finding the love letter to her grandmother, though Jacqueline decided she would not mention Martin's name or give a hint of a secret marriage.

"But since you couldn't make out the signature, how do you know the love letter wasn't from my father?" asked Aunt Nancy.

"It wasn't Grandpa's writing. Father has a lot of his letters."

"I suppose my mother had other admirers besides my father. It would have been quite natural. She was a very beautiful girl."

"Did she ever tell you about her love affairs, Aunt Nancy?"

"No . . . she was very reserved, you remember."

"But, Auntie, didn't you ever wonder why Grandmother was always so sad?"

"Yes . . . I have wondered about it, but you know she took the defeat of the South awfully to heart. She never got over that."

"Perhaps not," said Jacqueline, and decided not to argue that point. "Aunt Nancy, didn't Grandmother leave any other letters? I know so little about her. I'd love to go through her old things."

"Mother's best clothes and jewelry were divided soon

after her death. You have your share . . . her locket and bracelet and two of her rings."

"Oh, I mean old letters and little keepsakes and things like that . . . things of no value. Didn't she bring any of her own belongings with her when she came to live with you?"

"Only a trunk or two and her work basket and a few books. She didn't seem to have much sentiment about her old home or the things in it. I remember your dear mother was quite disappointed that Mother did not take some of her furniture. Your father didn't think it necessary to buy anything new for the house. He said he preferred to keep the house just as Mother had left it. Your Aunt Sally and I refurnished Emily's own room as her wedding present. We had it ready for her as a surprise when she came back from her honeymoon. She was so pleased. She thought the old walnut was gloomy."

"That was dear of you and Aunt Sally. I'm glad she had one room she liked. But may I look through Grandmother's trunk . . . and her work basket . . . and her books? I might possibly find another old love letter."

"The trunks are in the attic . . . there's nothing in them but sewing scraps and old clothes. The books were divided . . . your Father has her Bible . . . and I don't know what became of her workbasket. The children used to play with it . . . probably broke into pieces. Your Aunt Sally and I went through all of Mother's letters and papers and destroyed them years and years ago."

"And you didn't find any love letters?"

"Mercy no. What a romantic child you are. We found nothing but letters from old friends and receipted bills

and lots and lots of newspapers. Mother was a great one to keep old newspapers. I remember your Aunt Sally and I burned a pile as high as our heads."

With her aunt's permission Jacqueline went through her grandmother's two trunks and inspected carefully the linings. Afterwards she examined the cheerful sunny room in which her grandmother had died. All of Aunt Nancy's upstairs was carpeted . . . Jacqueline could not very well go about ripping up the heavy carpets and tapping the boards of her Aunt Nancy's floor. Nothing less mysterious and unromantic could possibly have been imagined than that room which had been her grandmother's. Substantial furniture of highly polished curly maple, large sunny windows, transparent lace curtains, blue wall paper with a gay border of pink roses . . . more and pinker roses the size of cabbages strewing the dun colored Axminster carpet. With a sudden revulsion of feeling Jacqueline told herself she was a silly young fool engaged in the wildest of wild goose chases. She walked home thoroughly discouraged and disheartened.

A letter had come that morning from Kent saying that he had seen Mr. Hatton and shown him, by request, some of his drawings and designs. Mr. Hatton had been most kind and encouraging but advised that Kent should go on with his studies. All morning Jacqueline had refused to think of that letter. She wouldn't think of it now . . . she wouldn't . . . she wouldn't. More than she had realized, more than she had believed possible, she had counted on the results of finding proofs of her grandmother's marriage to Martin Richards. What a fool she had been, what a brainless idiot to have paid any atten-

tion to the rambling statements of an old darkey, well over ninety and out of his head besides. Here she was in the twentieth century, in the state of Kansas, twenty-four years old and a college graduate who had always prided herself on her common sense and reasoning powers, grasping at Simon's delirious statements as if they had been gospel truths and imagining all sorts of wild crazy impossible things on account of them . . . convicting her own grandmother of bigamy and adultery and Heaven knew what else. Her grandmother of all persons, who had seemed almost like Cæsar's wife in her virtue and impeccability.

"I ought to be examined for insanity," said Jacqueline aloud.

It was an unusually warm day for May and as Jacqueline had stayed for lunch with her aunt she walked home when it was hottest. The sun was pouring into her bedroom and after bathing her flushed face and hands and getting into a kimono she went across the hall into her mother's room where it was dark and cool. Nothing had been changed in that room since her mother died. Jacqueline often went there when she was loneliest and now she lay down on the couch in the bay window and began to cry. If her mother had only lived! Her mother would have liked Kent. Every one who was simple and fine liked him. Kent was coming to-morrow to talk to her about going to Paris. If Mr. Hatton advised him to go, of course he must. And she must pretend that that was what she wanted . . . that all would be well with her if he went to Paris and left her in New Concord with her father. After Kent told her good-by, would she ever

see him again? Two . . . three . . . six years! She would be old, thirty perhaps . . . an old maid . . . before they could marry . . . Kent would be thirty-three. A man was still young at thirty-three. Kent might prefer a younger, fresher girl by that time. No, she wouldn't believe that of him. She wouldn't torture herself doubting Kent or his love for her. But to wait six years . . . or even two! To have the ocean between them! What if he got sick? But she mustn't think of that either or she couldn't let him go. Kent could take care of himself. He always had. He would be all right. Even though he would not want to go Kent would have a good time in Paris. He would work hard, he would miss her and have lonely unhappy hours . . . but he would have a good time. Any young man would have a good time in Paris whether he wanted to or not. While she, left behind, growing older and older, her father clinging to her . . . nagging her . . . sneering at Kent . . . Of course she meant to go away, to get a job, but as she had told Cousin Henry, she knew her father would always be after her, sending for her . . . pretending to be ill . . . anything, anything to keep her with him and away from Kent.

Jacqueline had been too excited to sleep much the night before. Presently she cried herself to sleep and dreamed fitfully of her childhood. She awakened feeling that she was a little girl again, put to bed in her mother's room. It seemed as if the door might open any minute and her mother come in to waken her. How familiar it all was. There stood her mother's little sewing table, her tortoise-shell toilet set was on the dresser, a cushion she had em-

broidered lay on a chair. Opposite Jacqueline hung a picture in a gold frame . . . a water color of a blue, blue lake with white swans and green, green trees. Jacqueline was so familiar with the picture that she scarcely saw it or noticed its quaint crudity. But as she lay there thinking of her childhood she was suddenly conscious that that picture did not belong in the room. When she was a very little girl and slept in a small bed beside the big one there had hung on that wall a gayly colored lithograph of a group of laughing children, romping about a May pole. Jacqueline and her mother had had names for all of them . . . Sarah and Wirt . . . Sylvia, a dark haired one they called Jacqueline. She remembered she always refused to sleep until she had said good night to every one of them. What had become of that picture? She hadn't thought of it for years. The water color had hung there a long time . . . certainly had been there when her mother died. Her grandmother had painted that picture, Jacqueline remembered . . . had painted it as a girl in Virginia. But if it had not hung there when Jacqueline was very small, where had it hung? Was it possible . . . just possible . . . that her grandmother had taken the water color with her to her Aunt Nancy's and her aunt given it back after her mother's death? Probably not. Probably the picture once had hung in the parlor and been brought upstairs as too old-fashioned. She mustn't let herself get excited again. She mustn't count on it. She must be calm . . . calm . . .

But she couldn't be calm. With a bound she was across the room, snatched the picture off its hook and ran with it to her room. She heard the hall clock chiming six.

Her father, methodical to the minute, would be home any moment now. But he usually washed his hands in the lavatory under the stairs and seldom came upstairs before dinner.

Where *was* that hammer? Her fingers were all thumbs. Damn it! Damn it! She couldn't get the nails out. Her father always walked home . . . there he was, coming up the front walk. If he came by chance to her room . . . guessed what she was after . . . Jacqueline put down the picture, rushed to her door and locked it. Perhaps the scissors would help. There . . . at last she had one end loosed and could get at the nails. How dusty it was . . . smelled faintly of sandal wood. Tacked over the back of the frame was some heavy paper . . . Jacqueline tore that off. And underneath, between another layer of paper, she found a little package wrapped in oiled silk. With fingers that trembled so she could scarcely command them, Jacqueline undid the outer wrapping and held in her hand a long narrow envelope on which was written in her grandmother's spidery handwriting, "To be destroyed unopened in case of my death."

Should she open it? Did she dare disobey her command from the grave? The envelope was sealed with red wax such as lawyers use. Her father was calling her . . . calling her insistently. Well, let him call. Dared she? Dared she? Kent had said to her once that people who were afraid to dare lost every chance in life. Well, she was not going to lose this chance . . . and quickly she broke the seal.

CHAPTER XXIV

"Don't you feel well?" asked Mr. Burrell of Jacqueline at dinner.

"I'm all right."

"But you're not eating anything."

"I'm not hungry . . . it's so hot."

Mr. Burrell had a moment of rare tenderness for this daughter who so often distressed and annoyed him. Certainly the child was looking ill. Damn that carpenter!! But despite her drawn look how pretty she was . . . almost a beauty. More and more she was growing to look like her grandmother . . . had the same clear white skin, the same gray eyes and heavy lashes. He had never known his mother except with white hair, but he supposed hers had once been dark like Jacqueline's. Jacqueline hadn't his mother's dignity or self-control, but she was young yet. And of course she had bobbed her hair. How under Heaven did the women expect to look dignified with their hair cut short like a man's? Jacqueline had had wonderful hair . . . unquestionably her crowning beauty. Before she had cut it off she had looked like what she was . . . a young gentlewoman showing generations of breeding. Now she looked more like a boy . . . a handsome fearless boy.

Some still small voice that Mr. Burrell seldom or never listened to told him that she was a gallant thing . . . this daughter of his . . . headstrong, mistaken more

times than not, but gallant and loyal withal, and fighting bravely for what she believed in, regardless of consequence. Never in his life had he known her to whine. Never had she taken anything lying down. Well, blood would tell, after all. And to think of her throwing herself on a carpenter . . . a nobody! Mr. Burrell told himself he honestly would rather see her in her coffin than married to Kent Allen. He would take her away . . . to Europe. No, not to Europe. To Japan and India. It had been years since he had had a real vacation and he had always wanted to visit the Orient. When they came back he would let Jacqueline do over the house . . . she had been wanting to do that for years. If she left his library and bedroom alone, she could do what she pleased with the house . . . spend anything within reason.

Mr. Burrell smoked his after dinner cigar, read his paper, read a chapter or two of Montaigne, his favorite author. It was an hour after dinner and he was feeling very content with the world when Jacqueline came into the library, closed the door and stood with her back to it. "Won't you sit down?" asked her father genially.

"No . . . I'd rather stand. Father, I've come to talk to you about something important . . . something very important to both of us. And I want to ask you for your sake as well as mine . . . more for your sake than mine . . . if you won't try to keep your temper . . . and not quarrel with me. It's so very important . . . and so hard to talk to you when you are angry."

"It's about that damned carpenter?"

"There . . . you're angry already."

"I am not angry. I suppose you have heard of such a

thing as righteous indignation. I am righteously indignant every time I am reminded of that person."

"I won't remind you of him any more than I have to, but I had a letter to-day, and Mr. Hatton, the head of a leading firm of architects in Kansas City, has seen Kent's drawings and designs and thinks he has great talent . . . that he ought to go to Europe and continue his studies. His professors at Columbia think the same and Kent has the money to go . . . over three thousand dollars. That's why he's been working as a foreman . . . because he could make more money that way. He could of course have got lots of other positions . . . where he'd worn a white collar and not soiled his hands . . . but he could make more money as a carpenter foreman."

"I don't see . . ."

"You will in a minute. Father, I am twenty-four years old . . . old enough to know what I want to do. And I know that the only thing I want . . . the only thing that will ever make me happy . . . is to marry Kent. I can't tell you how I know it . . . but I do. I'm surer of it than of anything on earth. And I want to ask you . . . to beg you . . . to give me the money my mother left me and let me marry Kent now and go to Paris with him."

"I would sooner give my consent to your putting a bullet through your brain."

"I may put a bullet through my brain . . . if Kent goes away and anything happens to prevent our marriage. I've felt like it at times."

"Nonsense!"

"Father . . . Mamma left me thirty thousand dollars.

You haven't let me have a cent of it and the income has been piling up until Cousin Henry says it must have doubled itself. If you will turn over to me the original thirty thousand Mamma left me, I'll give you freely, gladly, the rest of it and never ask another cent from you. I haven't been much comfort to you . . . I'd like you to have that other thirty thousand . . . to make up in a measure for all you've given me . . . and for all the ways I've failed you."

Mr. Burrell's righteous indignation flared to a righteous but consuming anger. "Are you trying to bribe me?" he cried.

"No . . . I'm making a fair and square business proposition. After all, the money is mine . . . sooner or later you'll *have* to give it to me."

"Not one cent . . . not one penny! . . ."

"Father, when Mamma left her money that way she never meant I was not to have it when I married the right sort of man. You know that. She trusted you to do what was best for me . . . and you're not doing that. You've never let yourself know Kent . . . you've never been fair to him."

"Do you suppose that you are a better judge than I . . . that I know nothing of men? That I can't tell a fortune hunter and a rounder when I see one? Even as a boy this Allen was notorious for his rowdyism and I tell you . . ."

"But Kent went away from New Concord before he was seventeen so his rowdyism couldn't have been very important. Is it reasonable to condemn him for life because he was a high spirited boy and drank a little too

much once or twice? You know yourself it isn't. Kent was in Columbia for three years . . . in New York preparing for college for two more years, in the army before that . . . and has been working for Mr. Schaefer here in town for the last year. You can talk to Mr. Schaefer yourself. I'll give you the names of his professors, his colonel . . . and you can write to them. If they don't give Kent a good record . . . a record any one could be proud of . . . I'll give him up."

"I don't care to delve any further into the young man's past history. I know now all I want to know about him."

"You won't go into it because you're afraid to find out you're wrong . . . because you prefer to believe Sheeby's backstairs gossip to the truth. You may call that fulfilling fairly the trust Mamma put in you, but I call it . . . plain dishonorable."

"How dare you say such a thing to me?"

"I dare because it's true. I know and you know that Mamma meant you to turn over her money to me on the day I married a fine, clean boy like Kent. You know she trusted you to be fair to me . . . and you aren't. You aren't."

"I," said Mr. Burrell thickly, "I . . . am a better judge of what is fair . . . and honorable . . . than you."

"Father . . . whether you give me that money or not . . . I shall go away in a few days . . . and I may never come back. I'm younger . . . you need me more than I need you. Do you want me to go away feeling that you have been unfair and unjust to me? I feel . . . I believe . . . that the thirty thousand dollars that came from my Grandfather Phillips is rightfully mine. To have

that money now would mean so much to me. I'll never forgive you . . . never want to see you again . . . if you don't give it to me now . . . and anything happens to keep me from marrying Kent."

"You . . . you dare to talk to me of forgiveness! No girl in this town, no girl in this state . . . has had as much done for her as you. And because I try to protect you . . . to guard your interests you turn on me like a tiger cat. And prate of forgiveness. Forgiveness! You ought to be on your ungrateful knees this minute begging me to forgive you for the things you have said."

"There seems to be a slight difference of opinion," said Jacqueline flippantly but fighting back her tears, "but I gather you do not intend to give me my money."

"Never! Never until you are thirty years old. I expect you to come to your senses long before then and to appreciate that I have saved you from something you would regret bitterly all the rest of your life. Not, however, that I expect you to acknowledge it. Not that I ever expect any thanks from you. There may be fathers who command the ordinary human affections as well as decent courtesies from their children, but I unfortunately am not one of them."

"Father . . . I warn you, you are going to be awfully sorry if you don't give me that money."

"Not half as sorry as you would be later if I gave it to you now."

"Very well then. Since you won't accept my first offer I have another . . . another fair and square business proposition. I have something to sell . . . for thirty

thousand dollars. You have first chance at it . . . but if you don't want it . . . I'll take it some place else."

"What have *you* to sell?" asked Mr. Burrell scornfully.

Jacqueline handed her father the clipping from the Wilmington paper that told of the death in 1907 of Major Martin Richards. In dead silence Mr. Burrell read it through, his face growing whiter and whiter. When he looked up his eyes were bloodshot and the hand that held the clipping was trembling as if he had the palsy.

"What . . ." he asked hoarsely, "has this . . . to do with me?"

"A good deal. You will notice that Major Richards was in Virginia in 1859. And that he left a large estate . . . and no will. Though I don't suppose it would matter if he *had* made a will."

"You think . . . you imagine . . . I would be interested in this piece of paper . . . that I would buy it from you?"

"Oh, no. That isn't of any value. What I have to sell you is a wedding license . . . and some letters."

"What do you mean?"

"I think you know what I mean . . . that Simon told you."

Mr. Burrell huddled down in his chair, his face a ghastly, greenish white . . . and somehow pitiful.

"Father . . . I'm sorry. I didn't want to do this. I tried every other way first. And you knew . . . you knew anyway. It isn't as if you hadn't known."

"I don't know what nonsense you're talking," blustered Mr. Burrell weakly.

"Didn't Simon tell you about Grandmother's runaway marriage to Martin Richards the day she was eighteen? And about their quarrel . . . and the court house burning down with the records of their marriage . . . and the minister who married them moving to Oregon? Didn't Simon tell you that?"

"Simon told me nothing. How could he? He was out of his head . . . crazy as a loon last time I talked to him. I've forgotten entirely the crazy things he said."

"Then I'll have to remind you."

"I do not care to have any of Simon's absurdities repeated to me."

"They're not absurdities . . . and they didn't come from Simon. At least all he gave me was a hint . . . one afternoon when he seemed delirious. Years before I had found a love letter in Grandmother's trunk signed Martin, calling Grandmother his darling Laura . . . his bride. And just before Simon died he sent me a message . . . not to give up until I found the wedding lines. I've been searching for them ever since . . . and this afternoon I found them . . . in the back of that old water color of the swans she brought from Virginia that hung in Mamma's room."

"You found . . . my mother's wedding license?"

"Her wedding license . . . to Martin Richards whom she married secretly a year before she married Grandfather . . . and a half a dozen letters."

"Where are they? Bring them to me this minute!"

"I have them put away . . . in a safe place. When you give me my thirty thousand dollars you shall have them."

"I don't believe a word of it . . . it isn't possible . . . absurd."

"You know it's true. I couldn't have imagined a thing like that. It's too terrible . . . too awful. Neither Simon nor I could have imagined it."

The picture of his mother as a girl stood on the desk facing Mr. Burrell. His mother . . . his mother . . . Before Jacqueline knew what he was doing he picked up the photograph and if Jacqueline had not snatched it away from him would have torn it to pieces.

"No, Father, no," cried Jacqueline. "You mustn't feel that way. Grandmother wasn't a bad woman. And think how she must have suffered . . . every day for almost sixty years! Think how sad she always was. For sixty years she went on paying for the mistake she made. Doesn't the pitifulness of it almost break your heart?"

"It isn't so . . . it can't be so," said Mr. Burrell dully. "I don't understand it."

"I don't either . . . altogether," said Jacqueline, "but I can guess a good deal. Martin and Grandmother must have fallen in love when he was teaching in the academy and she a pupil. But he was a Northerner . . . an abolitionist . . . and her father forbade him the house. Didn't Simon tell you . . . didn't Simon explain?"

"Simon told me nothing . . . nothing," persisted Mr. Burrell. "Simon was crazy . . . out of his head."

"As far as I can figure it out Grandmother didn't worry much about Martin's politics until after she married him . . . or perhaps she thought she could argue him into believing the South was in the right. Of course she couldn't . . . he seemed to have felt just as strongly the other way.

Anyway, they quarreled terribly after their secret marriage . . . and Grandmother sent him back his wedding ring. Martin tried to see her . . . went to the house . . . and her father struck him across the face with a riding whip. Didn't Simon tell you that?"

"No . . . I don't know."

"Martin was only twenty-two . . . proud and high tempered, I judge. And he had the old-fashioned idea that a wife must obey her husband. Martin commanded Grandmother in a letter . . . I have the letter . . . to acknowledge her marriage at once and go North with him. Grandmother must have replied that the records of their marriage had burned . . . the minister gone to Oregon . . . she had the license . . . and he had no way of proving they were married and that she would never acknowledge him as her husband or have anything to do with him until he threw in his lot with the South. Martin wrote her a violent letter, commanding her for the last time to come to him and vowing that if she did not he would go away, give her up . . . never see her again. After that they seemed to have stopped quarreling about the North and South and started quarreling about which one should give in first. Sometimes I've seen people in love who seemed possessed to tear each other to pieces. Grandmother and Martin were like that. They never seem to have brought each other much happiness. Perhaps if they had lived together they would have gone on tearing each other to pieces all their lives."

"My mother . . . was a woman of great reserve . . . of complete self-control."

"Not when she was a young girl . . . at least Simon

said not. She was like her father, he said . . . high-spirited and stubborn. He told me once that even as a child, if any one told her she *had* to do a thing, she wouldn't . . . even though they whipped and whipped her. She changed afterwards . . . after she did the terrible thing that broke her heart."

"It simply isn't possible," persisted Mr. Burrell stubbornly, "that my mother would have married my father . . . when she was already married to another man."

"That's what I thought at first. I couldn't believe it was possible myself for a long time. Of course she never meant for a second to marry Grandfather. Martin had written her he was going North . . . and she replied by announcing her engagement to Grandfather. Naturally she thought that would bring him flying to her feet. Or perhaps she thought he would come and carry her off in spite of herself . . . I sometimes wonder if she didn't hope he would come and carry her off, no matter what she said or did. But of course Martin didn't know she wanted him . . . and I suppose he could not forget that he had gone for her once and been struck in the face with a whip. He must have known that Grandmother was bluffing and he could not have dreamed she would dare go through with it. He even went to the church to see her married . . . and must have stood and waited for her to turn to him. Think of it, Father. He stood there in church and saw his own wife married to another man and never lifted a finger . . . because he had said he wouldn't give in first . . . or because he thought Grandmother loved Grandfather better than she did him. He must have been sure to the very last minute that Grandmother wouldn't

dare go through with that wedding. I wonder if he didn't stand where she could see him. But he didn't know Grandmother. He didn't understand her will or pride. Talk of women's righters and feminists, Father. Why, Grandmother was the most magnificent feminist I ever knew in all my life."

"Magnificent . . . magnificent?" queried Mr. Burrell blankly.

"Yes, magnificent. In a way she did a magnificent thing. Anyway she didn't back down. She said she wouldn't and she didn't. She'd made her dare and she went through with it . . . even though it worse than killed her. Of course she must have thought that Martin didn't want her any longer . . . just as he probably thought she didn't want him. Think of it, Father . . . she was barely nineteen . . . and what she did hurt her so she never laughed again. For almost sixty years she held her head up and pretended she was married to Grandfather . . . told no one . . . asked no one's pity . . . knowing all the while that any day . . . any minute . . . some one might come . . . she might be found out . . . disgraced . . . ruined . . . her children nameless. Don't you see the courage that took? Aren't you a little proud of her? I am . . . proud but so awfully sorry for her. To suffer like that all her life! Think of her loneliness! And of course we shouldn't be here . . . you and I . . . if she hadn't sinned."

Jacqueline, carried away by her own enthusiasm, was brought back to earth by an odd little sound from her father. Mr. Burrell clutched the arms of his chair.

Nameless . . . her children nameless, Jacqueline had said. If this monstrous thing were true, he was illegitimate . . . had no name . . . he and his sisters. Simon had told him, but he had refused to believe it. Simon had had no proof but his word. And Simon was dead . . . he had thought he was safe after Simon died. His mother . . . his own mother! He could *not* be illegitimate. He, John Taliaferro Burrell . . . so proud of his ancestry, of his old name . . . he a bastard . . . though so perfectly blameless. If there was a God in Heaven, he would not permit an unholy thing like that to exist. He a bastard . . . his mother no better than a woman of the streets! What was it Jacqueline had said . . . proud of her grandmother . . . magnificent? Proud . . . my God . . . what was there to be proud of? To be pointed at . . . nameless . . ? They would laugh at him . . .

What had he ever done to deserve such a punishment? It was his mother who should have been punished . . . his mother, whom he had revered and looked up to all his life. Jacqueline said she must have suffered . . . he hoped she had suffered! To bring a thing like this on him . . . and to keep the records of her sin. Why in the name of God hadn't she destroyed those miserable incriminating documents? Only a weak sentimental fool like a woman would have kept them. Perhaps they were forgeries . . . they wouldn't hold in a court of law . . . But suppose some one saw them? . . . that Jacqueline showed them to some one.

"Bring me . . . bring me those documents," he commanded, fiercely. "Bring them here to me . . . at once."

Jacqueline, who had been looking pityingly at her father, yearning to comfort him, shook herself and stood once more erect.

"Do I get my thirty thousand dollars?" she asked.

"Do you know the penalty for blackmail?" thundered Mr. Burrell, pounding half-heartedly on the table with his clenched fist.

"Yes . . . but a little disgrace . . . more or less . . . wouldn't hurt me . . . or the family either . . . after I'd told my story in court."

All the fight went out of her father. "Do you mean . . . you would actually make public . . . a thing like that . . . about your own Grandmother?" he asked weakly. "Disgrace us all . . . break my heart . . . break the hearts of your Aunt Sally and Aunt Nancy?"

"Why not? Grandmother is dead. It wouldn't hurt her. And the rest of you are all perfectly willing to break my heart . . . on account of a little miserable family pride. A lot we have to be proud of, too . . . haven't we?"

"What do you mean to do . . . if I don't give you the money?"

"I thought the heirs of Martin Richard's large estate might be interested in what I have to sell. But I'd be guided by Mr. Watson. I think it would be better to go to him than Cousin Henry or some member of the family."

Mr. Watson was an unscrupulous but very shrewd lawyer of New Concord and Mr. Burrell's bitterest enemy. His wife was one of the greatest gossips in town.

"Get out of my sight . . . out of my house. You are

no daughter of mine. I never want to see you again," blustered Mr. Burrell.

"Very well," said Jacqueline coolly, her heart in her mouth. Her bluff, her own magnificent bluff, had failed. Not for anything on earth would she have made public her grandmother's pitiful secret, shamed the two sweet old ladies who were her aunts. But her father was always willing to think the worst of her. She had counted on that. Well, anyway, she would carry her head high like her grandmother. She turned . . . put her hand on the door. "I'll see Mr. Watson in the morning. I suppose I can stay here to-night?"

She opened the door. "Wait a minute . . . wait a minute," begged her father. "If I . . . if I gave you . . . that money . . . how could I know you wouldn't tell anyway?"

"I'm afraid you'd have to trust me."

"Have you told any one . . . your Cousin Julia . . . young Allen?"

"Not yet."

"Would you promise . . . would you swear to tell no one?"

"Certainly."

"If you will come to my office in the morning with those documents . . . I will give you thirty thousand dollars . . . in securities. The rest of the money your mother left I shall keep for you until you are thirty . . . when you undoubtedly will be in need of it. But not a penny more shall you ever receive from me."

"Very well," said Jacqueline, trying to keep her voice from trembling. She had won . . . her bluff had won.

But she mustn't break down . . . she mustn't let her father know how frightened she had been. She got out of the room some way . . . upstairs . . . was in her room with the door locked. Suddenly she found herself shaking, her teeth chattering, her hands icy cold, and threw herself on the bed fully dressed and piled the covers over her. She had won . . . she was free at last of her father's tyranny. She could go with Kent to Paris. And never had she been more unhappy, more forlorn, than during that long, sleepless night.

CHAPTER XXV

THE next morning at ten o'clock Jacqueline went to her father's office, signed several receipts, received her securities . . . bonds, gilt-edged stocks, good farm mortgages . . . and turned over to her father his mother's wedding license and the faded letters written two-thirds of a century before but still so potent to cause shame and heartbreak. Mr. Burrell's office had been built before the days of steam heat and in one corner stood an unused grate. Her father had not once met Jacqueline's eye nor had he spoken to her except to explain necessary legal formalities. Now, without more than a cursory glance at the contents of the package his daughter had handed him, he walked to the empty fireplace, touched a match to the brittle papers and stood there silently, watching them burn. Jacqueline lingered unhappily, not knowing what to do or say. "Is there anything else?" she asked when the silence had grown unendurable.

"I should advise you," said her father formally as if he were speaking to a stranger, "to leave your securities with your Cousin Henry. He can collect the interest and forward it to you. I shall arrange at once to have the stocks and mortgages put in your name."

"You don't want to keep them for me?"

"No."

"Then I'll take them to Cousin Henry. Is that all?"

"Yes . . . except that I should think . . . for your own sake . . . for the sake of your two aunts . . . you

would not care to mention anything that would reflect . . . on . . . some one they hold very dear."

"You have my word of honor that I won't tell any one about Grandmother . . . not even Kent."

"Your word of honor," said Mr. Burrell bitterly. Still he did not glance at Jacqueline . . . kept his eyes on the grate and its airy blackened wisps that had once been paper. "The documents I just burned," he said half to himself, "were probably forgeries. But I did not care . . . for obvious reasons . . . to have them fall into the hands of unscrupulous lawyers."

Jacqueline made no reply. So her father already dared to claim that the documents were forgeries. In a week he would be certain they were. In a month, would doubt whether they ever existed. She need not feel so unhappy . . . like a Judas.

"When," asked her father, "are you planning to be married?"

"Probably very soon. Kent is coming to see me to-night."

"I should say the sooner the better. It is not very comfortable for either one of us . . . living in the same house."

"Kent will be through his work in Weston in about ten days. Would you mind if I waited that long . . . if I kept out of your way? If you prefer, I could stay at Cousin Julia's."

"I should prefer that you would arrange matters so that there will be as little talk about your affairs . . . and my part in them . . . as possible. I'll see that Sheeby keeps quiet. You had better stay at home and have your meals at different hours than mine. I can see

no advantage in making public your plans in advance . . . I do not care to have people questioning me. The day you are married you can say that I am ill."

"I'll do anything you say, Father."

"It would probably cause less talk . . . since you are to . . . marry this young man . . . if you saw him at your own home, instead of some place else."

"Very well. Would you like to see Kent . . . talk to him?"

"No. What will you tell your Cousin Henry?"

"I'll tell him that you decided to turn over to me my thirty thousand dollars and ask him and Cousin Julia not to say anything about it just yet."

"Tell him I do not care to discuss the matter. I believe that is all except that you will probably want to get some clothes. I shall leave two hundred dollars at the bank for you and you can charge what you like to me."

"Thank you, Father. That is very generous of you . . . you have always been generous. I shan't want much . . . just some traveling things."

"You had better lay in a supply . . . You understand this is the last time I shall ever pay for anything of yours?"

"I understand, Father . . . I don't suppose there is any use telling you how sorry I am . . . to have hurt you?"

"No. I can think of nothing more you and I can ever have to say to each other."

Without looking at his daughter Mr. Burrell turned and went into an inner office. Jacqueline was left staring at her securities, blinded helplessly with tears.

CHAPTER XXVI

JACQUELINE telephoned Mrs. Allen to have Kent come to see her at her own home instead of the Markams. Mr. Burrell went upstairs as soon as he had finished dinner and did not come down again. Kent arrived promptly at eight o'clock. "What's happened?" he inquired of Jacqueline as soon as he had greeted her. "Your Father hasn't had a change of heart?"

"No . . . but he thinks it would cause less talk if I saw you here."

Kent took Jacqueline by the shoulders, turned her to face the light. "You look as if you had been drawn through a knot hole. Are you sick?" he asked anxiously.

"I'm never sick . . . just a little fagged. I didn't sleep last night. Everything is all right . . . you can go to Paris."

"Damn Paris," said Kent violently and went and looked out of a window. Jacqueline made a move to follow him but changed her mind and seated herself on the couch.

"Kent . . . when will you be through your work in Weston?"

"In a week . . . eight or nine days at the most," answered Kent gruffly without turning around.

"Eight days will bring us to the fourteenth of May. The fifteenth is my Mother's birthday and I thought . . . if it suited you . . . if you wanted to . . . I'd like to be married on her birthday."

Kent stood perfectly still for at least a minute as if he had not heard or understood. Then he whirled abruptly around, but his face was expressionless though very white.

"You mean it? It's not a joke?"

"Of course I mean it."

Almost before Jacqueline had finished speaking Kent was across the room, and had flung himself on his knees and buried his head in her lap. Jacqueline's heart seemed to stand still. Why had he turned so pale? Didn't he want to marry her? Did he care so awfully about going to Paris . . . more than he cared about her? Of course he did not know they could both go.

"What is it, Kent? You're trembling. I thought you would be glad . . . a little."

In a moment or two Kent had himself in hand. "Glad! My God, there aren't words enough in the English language to tell you how glad I am. You've had me so frightened." He was still on his knees holding her close, his cheek now pressed against Jacqueline's shoulder where he could feel the curve of her firm, young breast.

"I thought you were sorry . . . didn't want to marry me."

Kent got to his feet, a little ashamed of his emotion and anxious to hide the tears in his eyes. "A lot you know about me apparently," he said. "But you *do* mean it . . . you *do* care enough to take a chance on my making good without any foreign polish?"

"I was always willing to take a chance . . . it almost broke my heart to pretend I wasn't. But more than anything else I wanted to do what was best for you."

"You're best for me . . . the best thing that ever came

into my life. You always made too much of my studying over there. I never would even have considered going after you said you'd marry me if I hadn't thought it meant so much to you . . . success I mean . . . and your Father's money. Not that I blamed you . . . I haven't very much to offer a girl like you."

"I haven't very much to offer, either . . . except myself. All I really care for in the world is you, Kent . . . just to be with you."

"My girl! My own girl!" Kent bent over and kissed a little curl on the back of Jacqueline's neck. He was so afraid of breaking down he scarcely dared to touch her. The fear, the dread of losing her that for weeks had hung over him like a black cloud shutting out the sunshine was suddenly lifted. His girl was his. She loved him as he loved her. She was willing to put her hand in his and go with him, give up a fortune, trust him to take care of her. Without a job, only a few hundred dollars in the bank . . . yet she was willing to marry him. In nine days . . . nine days . . .

"Jacqueline, I feel like the pup who ate the dried apples and took a drink. I don't know whether I am going to float up and walk on the ceiling . . . or bust."

Jacqueline remembered that she had not yet told Kent they could both go to Paris.

"Kent . . . I've something terribly important to tell you."

"You've told me the most important thing in the world already."

All Kent's buoyant self-confidence was coming back to him. The world once more was his football. He swooped

over Jacqueline, picked her up and seated himself with Jacqueline in his lap, and kissed her as if he would never stop.

"But, Kent, you haven't heard my news. You *must* listen."

"I don't want to listen to anything except that you are going to marry me in nine days."

"Maybe you won't want to marry me when you hear my news."

"A fat chance if you're counting on that. But what made you change your mind? Not that I care. But if you change it again, I don't know what I might do. Only . . . I couldn't bear it."

"I'll not change my mind."

"You did once, Jacqueline, you *are* sure now? I've been so damned unhappy."

"Kent . . . dearest, of course I'm sure. I've been unhappy too. But listen to me. Would you be willing to marry a blackmailer?"

"Depends entirely on the blackmailer."

"Well, I'm one . . . at least Father said I was. I've done a terrible thing . . . really, I'm not joking. I've given my word of honor I won't tell you or any one what it is but I *will* tell you this much. I found out about an old family scandal . . . not a murder or anything like that . . . a love scandal . . . but it was big enough to blow the roof right off this house and set the town by the ears. Simon gave me a hint of it and once long ago I found an old letter. Then Simon on his death bed sent me a message not to give up until I found . . . certain documents. So I didn't. I hunted everywhere . . . for

days and days . . . and yesterday I found them. Letters and other things. Father didn't have anything to do with the scandal . . . at least he was perfectly innocent . . . it was before his day . . . but he knew about it. Simon told him. I knew Father would rather die than have it made public, so last night I told him I'd exchange the papers I'd found for the thirty thousand dollars my mother left me . . . I offered to make him a present of the interest. At first Father wouldn't do it and then I threatened to go to Mr. Watson the lawyer . . . you know what a scamp he is. Of course I never meant to go to him . . . but Father thought I did . . . and he and Mr. Watson have hated each other for years. So this morning I got my money . . . two thousand dollars a year income. And if you still want me, we can both go to Paris."

Jacqueline started out bravely enough, but before she was half finished began to tremble. It seemed such a terrible thing when she put it in words. What would Kent think? He was so honorable.

Kent apparently did not know what to think. He sat staring at Jacqueline as if he could not make up his mind to believe she was capable of such an enormity.

"Kent . . . it was my own money . . . from my Grandfather Phillips. Father was just keeping it for me. Mamma meant him to give it to me when I married unless I picked out somebody terrible. Cousin Henry and Cousin Julia both believe that. Simon too. Mamma trusted Father to be fair to me . . . and he wasn't."

"So you applied a little pressure?"

"A good deal."

"You little son-of-a-gun!"

"You're not angry . . . disgusted?"

"I'm flabbergasted."

"But, Kent, I *couldn't* let you go to Paris without me . . . and I knew I *had* to make you go. I would have died if you had gone off and left me behind."

"Well, I'll be eternally damned," said Kent, and began to laugh. "What's a little blackmail between relatives? I suppose I ought to make you give it back."

"Oh, Kent . . . you wouldn't?"

"Not on your life . . . since it's your own money. If it had been your father's, I wouldn't let you touch it."

"You still love me . . . respect me?"

"I take off my hat to you. With you back of me I ought to make Leonardo da Vinci look like a piece of cheese."

"Kent, think of it . . . we can go to Paris . . . both of us."

Jacqueline . . . Jacqueline and Paris! The chance to make every dream come true. Jacqueline and Italy!! Jacqueline . . . Jacqueline . . . in nine days! Kent could no longer sit still. He abruptly let his knees go stiff and Jacqueline slide to the floor, then picked her up and began to romp with her with the exuberance of a young puppy . . . Mr. Burrell in the room above could hear their laughter . . . and then long silences. He could bear the laughter . . . the murmur of happy excited voices . . . but the silences . . . How he hated those silences.

Mr. Burrell had been too angry, too frightened and upset the night before to realize that at last he had lost

Jacqueline. Last night he fairly hated her . . . told himself he never wanted to see her again. Now he knew that Jacqueline was his all in all in life . . . the only thing, the only one he cared for. He was too old now to learn to care for any one else. And he had lost her. In spite of all he had done to keep her, in spite of the sacrifices he had made, sending her to college, to Europe, lavishing money on her, she cared nothing for him . . . nothing. For this stranger . . . the carpenter . . . a man whom she would have passed a few months ago on the streets with a casual bow, she was willing not only to leave her father but to shame him. Shame, disgrace, a father's suffering . . . what were they to her? This morning she had been for a minute or two a little sorry. At least her voice had sounded sorry. But already she had forgotten all about him . . . was laughing . . . laughing . . .

He went back through the years. If he had done this or that . . . if he had not let her go to college . . . if he hadn't given in that time about the convent . . . better still, if he had kept her home with him instead of sending her away to school, would it have made any difference? Or was it Sheeby? If he had let Sheeby go, would Jacqueline have stayed with him? In a brief moment of clear-sightedness Mr. Burrell realized that nothing he could have done or left undone would have held Jacqueline very long. She was of pioneer stock on both sides . . . strong-willed, restless. From her babyhood she had defied him . . . fought for her freedom. Inevitably the day would have come when she would have gone from him . . . insisted upon finding her own wilderness . . .

on treading her own paths. If it had not been the carpenter, it would have been some one else . . . or she would have gone alone. Of course this mad marriage would not last. When he had spent her thirty thousand dollars and knew he could get no more, young Allen would be glad enough to send her home. But would Jacqueline come? She was proud . . . independent. Mr. Burrell knew Jacqueline would rather die than come creeping home for refuge. She would never come back.

Downstairs there was more laughter . . . more eloquent silences. How cruel the young were to the old! Mr. Burrell, as a young man, unconsciously had expected all the world to grow old with him. He had not realized that some day he would be an old man, practically alone, and unwanted in a world of carelessly cruel young people. If Emily had lived . . . but Mr. Burrell knew only too well he never had loved his wife as he had loved his mother and daughter. It was a warm night, but he found himself shivering. His mother . . . his mother! Jacqueline might have left him his love for his mother.

He got up, slammed down the windows and picked up his book. Two hours later, when he heard Jacqueline coming upstairs to bed, he was still sitting there in the hot room, the strong light falling on his bowed head and the page of his book . . . the page where he had opened still unread.

CHAPTER XXVII

At half past three o'clock on the afternoon of the fourteenth of May, Jacqueline drove to the office of the New Concord *Daily Globe* and sought out the society reporter. "I have an item for you, Miss Comstock," Jacqueline said. "I hope it isn't too late for to-day's paper."

"It is a little late . . . I think they're closing the forms. Anything of importance?"

"I don't know. It's of importance to me." She handed the other a typewritten sheet. Miss Comstock read the first few lines, gave a little squeal and started up the stairs to the composing room as fast as her short fat legs would carry her. "Wait a minute . . . wait until I come back," she called to Jacqueline, but Jacqueline waved to her gayly and was gone. A minute later the girl was speeding up North Fifth Street a good deal faster than the law allowed. She had telephoned her Aunt Nancy to meet her at her Aunt Sally's and she had to get there and break her news to them before the *Globe* appeared on the street.

It is almost a physical impossibility to keep a secret in a town small enough and homogeneous enough to keep every one acutely interested in the affairs of his neighbors. Jacqueline and Kent had kept the news of their approaching marriage secret by taking literally no one into their confidence except the Markams and Kent's

mother. Only this morning had Jacqueline told her father the day . . . told him barely in time so that he could stay home from the office and pretend to be ill. Even Sarah and Mrs. Sawyer did not know until after lunch . . . they could be trusted not to tell for a few hours . . . and Jacqueline had hurried from the interview with the clergyman who was to marry her straight to the *Globe* office. She and Kent had made all their plans before he left that last evening. If they sailed at once, he would be able to take his examinations in June for the Beaux Arts. He had an ex-buddy, an official in a steamship office, who could be counted on to get them a stateroom. Cousin Henry had promised to rush through the passports . . . he had a friend in Washington who also could be counted on. Kent did all his telegraphing from Weston. Jacqueline and Mr. Markam did theirs from Saint Joe or Kansas City, and when Kent called Jacqueline by long distance . . . as he did almost daily . . . they were careful to say nothing that might arouse suspicions. Jacqueline and her Cousin Julia went almost every morning to Kansas City to shop, but no one thought anything of that . . . Jacqueline and Mrs. Markam were forever going to Kansas City after clothes or to matinées. So no one guessed, no one had the slightest suspicion, and the whole town gasped when the *Globe* came out half an hour late with Jacqueline's item on the front page under a double heading.

"Mr. John Taliaferro Burrell announces the engagement of his daughter Jacqueline to Mr. Kent Warfield Allen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Waring Allen, the marriage to take place to-morrow afternoon at half after

five o'clock, in the Trinity Episcopal Church, the Rev. Mr. Benjamin officiating. Owing to the sudden illness of her father, Miss Burrell will be given in marriage by her cousin, Mr. Henry Markam. There will be no attendants and the bride will wear her traveling gown. The wedding supper will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Markam where the guests will be limited to immediate relatives of the bride and groom. The young couple will take the nine o'clock train for Saint Louis and will sail June second on the *S. S. Republic,* United States Line, for France where they expect to remain during the next two years while Mr. Allen finishes his studies in architecture. Mr. Allen was graduated last June with high honors from the School of Architecture, Columbia University, New York City. At the outbreak of the war he enlisted in the U. S. Signal Corps and served for two years in France where he was one of the three men under age in the A.E.F. to be given a commission. Miss Burrell is a graduate of Bryn Mawr."

Probably no wedding ever held in New Concord created more interest or excitement than Jacqueline Burrell's wedding to Kent Allen. There had been no time for formal invitations, but Jacqueline's aunts and cousins telephoned her invitations the evening before while Kent attended to his own. Jacqueline's list had been only fairly long . . . Kent's short . . . but the church was packed. Many came who were not invited. Nothing could have been simpler than that wedding. Only the altar of the church was decorated. The bride's father's friends acted as ushers . . . older men who had known her since babyhood. Jacqueline was a little pale, but very

lovely in her tailored gown and hat of royal blue with touches of silver. Every one in the church knew that Jacqueline would be beautifully and appropriately dressed in something exquisitely becoming. They expected her to be a beautiful bride . . . and after she had made her entrance on the arm of her Cousin Henry they scarcely looked at her. Jacqueline was an old story. It was not Jacqueline they had come to see but her bridegroom, the carpenter. A few knew him, a great many had seen him . . . in his overalls. They expected him to be shy and awkwardly self-conscious . . . almost uncouth beside Jacqueline's daintiness. It was something of a shock to find that he was neither uncouth nor awkward . . . that he carried himself erect like an ex-soldier and wore his well-cut clothes a little better than any man present, excepting only that pattern of fashion, Dr. Whittemore.

It is not often that a bridegroom manages to outshine his bride at their wedding . . . particularly when the bridegroom happens to be of very little importance or not specially good looking and his bride has both beauty and local prominence . . . but that is what Kent Allen did at his wedding to Jacqueline. It was not because he looked handsome . . . though he *was* handsome that afternoon . . . or because he so obviously had eyes only for Jacqueline. No one could say just what it was, but nevertheless it was Kent who dominated. Suddenly he was no longer the carpenter but the college graduate and ex-officer . . . and every woman present understood perfectly for the moment why Jacqueline had fallen in love with him. Marriages were common enough in New Concord as elsewhere, love affairs of everyday occurrence.

But in that little stone church before its candle-lit altar suddenly had entered Romance, that rarely precious thing that every one seeks and so few find, and for a moment every one present felt touched and uplifted by its glowing wings.

And Kent most of all. Kent was fairly walking on air. It was Jacqueline who fumbled over her responses and made them in so low a voice that not even those in the front rows could hear her. Kent who spoke up firmly . . . "I Kent . . . take thee Jacqueline . . . to have and to hold . . ." When Kent turned to do down the aisle with his wife on his arm his face was glowing. "The only absolutely satisfactory looking bridegroom I ever saw in my life," said Miss Fanny Northrup, who boasted she had attended every prominent wedding in New Concord in the last fifty years, whether she was invited or not. Kent kept looking down at Jacqueline, squeezing her arm. Half way down the aisle he warned her that if she didn't hold onto him he was going to break into the Charleston, and in the vestibule he kissed her, in full view of half the church.

"Well, Mrs. Allen?"

Mrs. Allen! Mrs. Allen!! "Oh, Kent, say it again."

They ran for their carriage in a shower of rice thrown by a crowd assembled at the church door. Mr. Burrell had never given up his horses and Boley was driving them . . . a prouder man almost than Kent . . . certainly just as proud. Mr. Burrell, sitting down to his solitary dinner, heard the carriage whirl up the Markam driveway and knew that Jacqueline's name no longer was Burrell. He tasted his cream of fresh mushroom

soup but could not finish it. Sheeby brought him a broiled squab guinea hen, fresh peas, strawberry short cake, but he only pretended to eat. Hallie had gone to the Markams to help . . . Jess and Boley were hanging around the back door. He and Sheeby were alone.

After Jacqueline was dressed for her wedding she had gone to her father's door, but he would not answer her knock or call. Now he went into the library, pulled down the blinds and switched on the lights. Sheeby was left in the dining-room staring enviously out of the window toward the Markams. Sheeby was glad enough to have Jacqueline married and out of the way, but she was furious that she had been kept in the dark about the wedding plans, and felt it a personal and unmerited insult that Jacqueline had chosen Cora instead of her to cook her wedding supper. Sheeby had protested bitterly the evening before . . . after Jess had brought her the *Globe* with its startling announcement. "It ain't right," she had said to Mr. Burrell, "it ain't fittin' that Mis' Jac'line should have her weddin' breakfast ennywheres but right here in her own house." But Mr. Burrell had not answered her and Jacqueline, when she went to her, said it was too late now. It seemed more than she could bear that Cora had known all along what she had never even guessed. Cora and Mrs. Markam had baked the wedding cake the day before . . . a Lady Baltimore from an old family recipe. It looked right enough from the outside, but Cora never had been much of a cake maker . . . had to have Mrs. Markam help her. What a wedding cake Sheeby would have baked if they had left it to her . . . what a supper she would have cooked! Cora

had to have in Carrie Moody and Kate Hanley for the supper . . . to do what Sheeby could have done alone if she had known in time. They called it supper but it was to be a regular dinner as far as she could make out . . . one big table and two smaller ones. They *had* condescended to borrow some of the Burrell china and glassware and silver. She understood there was to be champagne . . . that Mr. Markam had got hold of it somehow. It didn't seem right to her that enny one but Mr. Burrell should be paying for that wedding feast . . . furnishing champagne that was worth its weight in gold. There was to be a check for five hundred dollars at the bride's plate . . . from her two aunts . . . and another check for five hundred at the groom's from the Markams' and various cousins. Mis' Jac'line's papa hadn't given her a cent as far as Sheeby could find out, only a few clothes, and Sheeby for the first time in her life was ashamed of him. Even the Allens, poor as they were, had given the bride and groom a hundred dollars.

Sheeby went over to the table and picked up the dishes. Mr. Burrell hadn't eaten any dinner but for once Sheeby did not care. The wedding guests would have "et" a plenty if Sheeby had had a chance at the supper. She supposed Cora would be so set up there would be no living with her now. And Hallie too . . . and Jess . . . and Stella . . . who all had had personal invitations to the wedding and had sat in a front pew just behind the family. Sheeby had not been invited . . . not really invited . . . though Jacqueline *had* told Hallie casually that if Sheeby wanted to come to bring her along. Sheeby had her pride . . . catch her accepting an invitation

given in that way. She gave a plate a vicious swipe, dropped it and felt somewhat relieved when it broke into a dozen pieces, even though it was one of the best Haviland dinner set. Sheeby took a long time over her dishes, but the lights still streamed forth gayly from the windows next door. Probably they had finished their dinner in the dining-room by now . . . would be feasting in the kitchen . . . with the bride coming in with her new husband by and by to say good-by to them. Jacqueline hadn't bothered to say good-by to Sheeby.

Sheeby sighed a monumental sigh. Then remembering that Mr. Burrell had not eaten a bite of dinner . . . not a real good bite anyway . . . heated up some soup and put it in the thermos bottle, made him some chicken sandwiches, wrapped them in a damp napkin, arranged a tray and took it up to his room. Mr. Burrell was sure to be sleepless and hungry in the night. Sheeby was annoyed with Mr. Burrell, but she could not neglect him. She turned down his bed . . . smoothed his pillows and lighted his night lamp. When his sleeplessness was very bad he sometimes took a sleeping powder. Sheeby found one now and put it beside his bed with a carafe of fresh water. Jacqueline's room was in wild disorder . . . tissue paper, boxes, powder strewn all about. Sheeby half closed the door so her papa couldn't see in. Then she could no longer stand it and her dignity collapsed altogether before her need of going over to the Markams' and joining that merry throng in the kitchen. She would stay only a few minutes, pretending, as Mr. Burrell had told her, that he was ill and that she had to get back to him. But it was literally impossible for Sheeby to

go to bed that night without sampling that wedding cake.

So Mr. Burrell was quite alone in the house when there came a tap on the library door . . . "Come in," he said listlessly, thinking it was Sheeby. He did not turn round, but in the mirror over the mantelpiece he could see Jacqueline standing in the doorway . . . and behind her her new husband . . . the man who had taken her away from him.

"Father . . . I couldn't go without saying good-by."

Jacqueline came forward, stood by his chair, but Mr. Burrell picked up his paper and did not speak. All the while he was pretending to read he was studying covertly the mirrored image of the young man who had stolen Jacqueline. When his emotions were not blinding him Mr. Burrell was shrewd enough. He prided himself, moreover, on being a judge of men. There was something unmistakably manly and honest about Kent . . . his mouth was firm, his eyes direct. And the way he looked at Jacqueline . . . Mr. Burrell realized in spite of himself that his threat to disinherit his daughter meant nothing to Kent. Another young fool, thought Mr. Burrell bitterly, bred of pioneer stock and found scarcely any place but in a pioneer land like America, who would glory in standing on his own feet and preferred making his own way. Well, he was young yet. He did not know how hard and uncertain success was to one without money or influence. Some day he would be glad enough to come to him for help . . . sorry enough about that lost half million.

"Good-by, Father. Try to love me a little." Jacqueline dropped a kiss on her father's bald spot, turned to

Kent, who slipped a protecting arm about her . . . and was gone. With her husband . . . her husband! Why, she was only a baby . . . barely twenty-four . . . And she was gone with that stranger. How gentle and defenseless she had looked . . . how exquisitely virginal. All her loveliness at the mercy of a man she scarcely knew . . . whom none of them knew. How could she realize what she was doing . . . a child like that . . . motherless?

Mr. Burrell had hated Kent before, but never as he hated him now. Perhaps back of it, unconsciously, was not only jealousy but a bitter unreasoning envy. Mr. Burrell so resented being old. He resented too that he had waited until he was middle-aged to marry. His had been no romantic love affair. Nor had he married an exquisite, ardent young girl, with a skin like wild rose leaves . . . fragrant . . . Once when he had been twenty-one or two there had been a girl, a mechanic's daughter, with pink cheeks, sparkling black eyes and soft rounded curves. Mr. Burrell had fled from her because he had felt it was impossible to marry her. She had been playful, innocently voluptuous, yielding. He had known that she was his for the taking . . . and he had run away . . . trying to be honorable. He had not thought of her for forty years, but now he wished fiercely that he had not run away . . . no matter what the consequences . . . What had he ever known of love . . . of passionate romantic love? Nothing . . . nothing. Now that he was old, he was overwhelmed with regrets. Never to have lived fully . . . never to have loved passionately . . . fiercely . . .

Would that young man be gentle with Jacqueline? She had looked so young . . . somehow pitiful. "Try to love me a little," she had said. Didn't she know, was it possible she did not know, how much he loved her? Did she think her new husband would ever love her as her father did? He should not have let her go that way. He should have talked to Kent . . . got to know him. The boy had looked strong and honest . . . but was he gentle . . . tender? Perhaps Mr. Burrell realized for the first time how little of gentleness, of understanding, or tenderness he himself had shown Jacqueline when she needed it. But he pushed that thought aside as he pushed other self-accusing thoughts aside and went again over the list of the things he had done for Jacqueline. No millionaire had done more for his daughter than he had done for Jacqueline. For once the list . . . camp, school, college, trips to New York and Europe, her fine clothes, diamond bracelet . . . failed to comfort him. The vision of Jacqueline standing there in the doorway . . . looking at him wistfully . . . almost pitifully . . . and of Kent putting his arm around her and drawing her away, would not down. Perhaps she had been frightened . . . had wanted her father to reassure her . . . She had looked so young . . . so young . . . and defenseless. Why, it seemed only yesterday that she was a little thing, running to the door to meet him, smothering him with kisses. Her mother used to dress her in a white dress with a blue sash, and when it was warm would pile her curls in a knot on the top of her head. Jacqueline could scarcely wait for him to get into the house. Once when the screen door had stuck she had cried.

It was not yet nine o'clock, but Mr. Burrell got up heavily, switched off the lights and went wearily upstairs to bed. He found the sleeping powder Sheeby had left him . . . took it and hunted up another. There was the bitterness of death in his heart when he fell finally into a heavy troubled sleep.

CHAPTER XXVIII

JACQUELINE telegraphed her father from New York and for a time wrote to him every week. The letters went to the office and he never referred to them, but Sheeby found them in a neat pile in his desk in the library. Evidently Mr. Burrell never answered the letters, for after a few weeks they stopped coming. Sheeby was quite out of patience with her employer for the way he continued to treat Jacqueline, but his evident unhappiness, his quietness, the droop in his shoulders would have softened a heart far harder than Sheeby's. Her meals had always seemed the best possible, but now they might almost have been called poems in food. Sheeby borrowed cook books, sought out new recipes, went herself to market daily, seeking delicacies that might tempt Mr. Burrell's flickering appetite. Sheeby scarcely had a moment to herself all that long hot summer, for when she was not standing over a glowing stove she was out making her weary rounds on a still hunt for news or racy gossip that might serve to amuse or interest Mr. Burrell. The pity of it was, that for all Sheeby worked until she was ready to drop her efforts were entirely wasted. Mr. Burrell ate sparingly of what was put before him but never seemed to notice whether it was "vittels or sawdust" and the most spicy tales or amusing comments or monologues Sheeby could contrive fell on deaf ears. No longer was he interested in the saga of Goat Edwards

and Mrs. Goat. The Miller divorce, which all but threw New Concord into convulsions, he dismissed scornfully as disgusting. When the flirtatious Mrs. Dennison Rogers, aged thirty, presented her feeble seventy-year-old husband with lusty twins, it meant nothing more to him than that two more unfortunates had been born into a weary world. The summer was almost over and Sheeby was quite at her wit's end when she discovered that what Mr. Burrell *was* interested in, indeed what he was hungering for, was news of Jacqueline.

Sheeby had tried often enough to talk to him of Jacqueline and had been relentlessly snubbed and put in her place. He even had refused to discuss . . . or read in Sheeby's presence . . . the ecstatic cable Jacqueline had sent Mrs. Allen announcing that Kent had passed his examinations and been admitted as a student to the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts, which Mrs. Allen had sent round to Mr. Burrell immediately by the youngest Allen boy. But that had been in the first early days when his wound was still too raw to bear touching and Jacqueline's letters were still coming regularly. Now all was changed. Sheeby had time at last to sit on her back porch and rock contentedly back and forth. Her feet no longer hurt her so she couldn't sleep nights. All she had to do when she wanted news with which to cheer or entertain the master of the house was to step across the yard to the Markams' or up the street a piece to Mis' Allen's.

"Well," she would say, standing by the swinging door that led to the pass pantry after Mr. Burrell had been served at table, "well, I hear that Mister Kent is takin'

Mis' Jac'line around the battlefields to show her where it were he licked them no-account Germans and the houses he visited at while he were doin' it. Mis' Jac'line wrote Mis' Markam that they've met up with so many old French women with beards who throwed their arms around her husband's neck and kissed him she ain't had a chance to kiss him herself for a week. Sounds likely, don't it?"

Or . . . "Mis' Jac'line wrote his ma she feels so sorry for all the other women in the world who can't be married to that there Kent of her'n, she can't scarcely bear it. Must make her feel terrible bad, don't you reckon? Well . . . we've all felt the same. Leastwise I did about my first and third. I never did think much of my second even when I married him."

Again . . . "Mis' Jac'line's wrote she likes the French people all right, all righty only she kind of holds it against them that they can't understand their own language. She says she studied French for five years in her grand schools so she don't reckon it can be her fault. Mister Kent gets along with them because he learned their talk before he'd ever went to college, but them Frenchies are so dumb and uneducated they can't understand a word Mis' Jac'line says. Mister Kent says the trouble is the war stopped too soon . . . that us Americans had took the English language and made it over into something human and was startin' to do the same to the French when the war ended and we lost interest. He says it's a terrible pity, and I guess maybe he's right."

Mr. Burrell always listened avidly, but he almost never made any comments. Occasionally Sheeby tried him with

a question, but nearly always had to answer it herself. "Well, they've had their first quarrel," she announced one evening. "What do you suppose it were all about?"

"I reckon a man never would guess it in a million years," went on Sheeby after Mr. Burrell had made it evident by his silence that he was doing no supposing that evening. "Mis' Jac'line up and dreamed one night that her new husband were carryin' on with one of them pretty French girls and it made her so hoppin' mad she wouldn't much more'n speak to him for three days. She said he were awful unreasonable when he found out what the trouble were about but that he didn't stay mad long. She says he's like that . . . flares up quick but is over it just as quick. That's the easiest kind to live with. Deliver me enny day from a sulker," added Sheeby out of a large experience and with a hard look at Mr. Burrell.

Late in September Sheeby informed Mr. Burrell that Jacqueline and Kent were looking around for an apartment. According to Sheeby, they had grown so hungry for good home cooking they had both burst into tears when they happened across a pictured plate of corned beef and cabbage in an American magazine. In October Sheeby announced that they had found a flat . . . "five flights up and no elevator but when you get there the view is grand. It belonged to an artist, Mis' Jac'line says, and he's left his furniture in it. It's only got one big room and a little bedroom and a kitchen. Mis' Jac'-line's doin' her own work and she says she wishes to God she'd spent less time in the parlor and more in the kitchen so that I could have learned her to cook. She

says Mister Kent eats everything she messes up and lets on he likes it, but that he ain't what you'd call a convincin' liar. She wants that Mis' Markam should send her a cook book and a measurin' cup and me my recipe for chocolate cake and lemon pie. She says there's a French woman helpin' learn her, but I don't reckon them Frenchies know much about cookin'."

"The French are the best cooks in the world," said Mr. Burrell.

"Oh, they are, are they," sniffed Sheeby belligerently. "Well, Mis' Jac'line's livin' over there and she don't seem to think so."

Early in November Sheeby triumphantly informed Mr. Burrell that "Mis' Jac'line had wrote to ask jest how I make my turkey stuffin' . . . that nobody in France could make a stuffin' that could ennyways touch mine. She's goin' to give a dinner Thanksgivin' day and she says that if she had a aero-plane she certainly would fly over and carry me back to cook it. Seems kind of a pity she ain't run across one of them best cooks in the world you was tellin' about. Maybe then she wouldn't have to bother herself writin' way over here to me for instructions."

"Mis' Jac'line had ten extra for dinner Thanksgivin' day," Sheeby informed Mr. Burrell in December, "and everybody thought the turkey stuffin' was the best they ever put in their mouths. Three young ladies she knowed in college was there . . . one of 'em's married to a Frenchman and she brung him along . . . and the rest of the guests was students at Mister Kent's college. All them students came to the dinner carryin' two bottles of wine apiece and Mis' Jac'line said that at first it made

her kind of mad bringin' things to drink to her party, but that Mister Kent said they could insult him that way enny day in the year. They was to have had dinner at five o'clock, but Mis' Jac'line didn't know it took four hours for a turkey to roast so it was seven o'clock before dinner was ready and nobody had et any lunch but the Frenchman. But she said none of 'em minded and that they drunk up all the wine the guests had brought and was startin' in on the supply Mister Kent had laid in by the time the turkey got itself roasted. When the Frenchman came to say good-by he up and kissed Mister Kent on both his cheeks. Mis' Jac'line said the Frenchman had a beard and Mister Kent made such a face she couldn't stop laughin' about it the rest of the night. It must have bin quite a party . . . didn't none of them go home until two in the mornin'."

Long before Thanksgiving Sheeby began to worry over Jacqueline's Christmas and became so angry with Mr. Burrell that he did not respond to her hints that he send Jacqueline a Christmas present that she actually did not care when she burnt his steak, and served him potatoes cooked the same way three days in succession.

"Mis' Markam's sendin' Mis' Jac'line a box," Sheeby said pointedly, "and Mis' Allen and her Aunt Sally and her Aunt Nancy and Mis' Sawyer like as not. Ain't we goin' to send her ennything?"

"No," said Mr. Burrell and Sheeby flounced out of the dining-room in a huff. The next day she baked the largest, richest, most luscious fruit cake that probably ever was baked in the whole state of Kansas, seasoning it and moistening it recklessly with Mr. Burrell's carefully treasured brandy, covering it with hard sauce an inch

thick and decorating it with "Merry Xmas" done in little red candies. Mrs. Markam sent the cake off for her and after it was gone Sheeby felt a little better. She had done what she could. At least Mis' Jac'line would be able to hold up her head and say she had had a box from home.

That it should be Sheeby, who not long before had been acutely jealous of Jacqueline and who had criticized and quarreled with her for seven years, who should now elect herself Jacqueline's champion and defender apparently seemed neither incongruous nor ironically amusing to Mr. Burrell any more than it did to Sheeby herself. After all Sheeby was only upholding the dignity of the family as she saw it . . . and it did not seem to her either dignified or sensible for Mr. Burrell to carry on so just because Mis' Jac'line fell in love and got married same as any other young lady. Sheeby would have preferred to have had Jacqueline marry Dr. Whittemore, but no one could say it wasn't a girl's right to choose her own man. *She* had to live with him, didn't she? And she's married now, ain't she? Well, then, what's the sense of her papa's not makin' the best of what is?

The Christmas cake was a great success . . . a countess came for tea and praised it highly and Kent ate so much of it he was sick for a week. "I guess there's others besides those Frenchies who know something about cookin'," said Sheeby darkly to Mr. Burrell.

"Mister Kent's gettin' on grand with his studies, Mis' Jac'line wrote," Sheeby told her employer in the early spring. "She says he's the smartest man in the whole school . . . and the best drawer and the best dancer. They seem to do a lot of dancin', them two. He's awful

popular too, Mis' Jac'line says, and speaks French better'n the natives. Mister Markam says he hopes with all his heart that none of them secret service men don't open some of Mis' Jac'line's letters and find out how awful smart Mister Kent is. He says the French government needs straightenin' out the worst way and if they ever found out they had the smartest man in the world right there in one of their schools, there never would be a chanct for Mister Kent to get away and come home. I reckon that were one of Mister Markam's jokes."

"Of course," said Mr. Burrell, starting in on his salad.

"About this time next year Mis' Markam says they'll be thinkin' about startin' home," ventured Sheeby. "I suppose Mis' Jac'line and him too won't be able to wait much more'n a minute after they get on this side of the water before they'll come flyin' home on a visit."

Mr. Burrell went on with his salad . . . said nothing.

"Where'll they stay?" asked Hallie tactlessly.

"Where else *would* Mis' Jac'line stay but right here?" Sheeby answered quickly.

"I thought maybe they might stay at Mis' Allen's."

"That little bit of a house! And three big bedrooms upstairs goin' to waste," said Sheeby scornfully.

"I been thinkin'," went on Sheeby to Mr. Burrell, "that ef we ever *are* goin' to have a new bathroom put in, now's the time. You and her and him would have an awful time tryin' to use one bathroom. And Mis' Jac'line's room ain't been done over sense the first year she were in college. The paper's awful faded. Mis' Markam's havin' her upstairs done over next week . . . she could pick out the pattern."

Mr. Burrell finished his salad, finished his dessert, drank his coffee and departed for the library. Sheeby and Hallie cleared the table and washed up the dishes. Sheeby was fussing over some salt-rising bread she was getting ready to bake next day when Hallie, who had been brushing up the crumbs in the dining-room, came rushing back into the kitchen.

"Ma, he's telephonin' Mis' Markam about the paper for Mis' Jac'line's room," whispered Hallie excitedly.

"No?"

They tiptoed into the back hall and opened cautiously an inch or two the door that led into the front hall.

"I'll leave that to you," Mr. Burrell was saying. "Anything suitable for a bedroom."

There was silence a half minute. "Yes . . . the Southwest bedroom . . . the one Jacqueline used to have. What? . . . Oh, that will do . . . any time . . . there's no hurry. Yes? . . . well, there *is* one thing more. I've been meaning for some time to put in an extra bathroom and I thought I might as well have it all done at once . . . Yes . . . where the hall closet is. That seems the best place . . . but you come over and decide."

Sheeby and Hallie returned silently to their kitchen and Sheeby dropped into her favorite rocker. "Don't it beat all?" she asked delightedly.

And it did. It was a year and more, possibly two years, before there was any chance of Jacqueline's return. He would not write to her, he would not ask her to come, but already her father with anxious expectant heart was preparing for her homecoming.

THE END

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